THE WHITE ELEPHANT

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THE

WHITE ELEPHANT;

OR,

THE HUNTERS OF AVA

AND

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN FOOT

BY

WILLIAM DALTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE WAR TIGER," "THE WOLF-BOY OF CHINA," ETC.

With Illustrations by Harrison Weir.

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A FEW WORDS WITH MY READERS.

While reserving as my own secret the means by which I became possessed of Harry Oliver's autobiography, I deem it my bounden duty to the kind friends who so warmly received *The War Tiger* and *The Wolf-Boy of China*, to impress upon their minds that Harry's description of notable persons, places, animals, plants, as well as the manners, customs, and superstitions of the semi-barbarous Burmans, is substantially exact, as I myself have verified, by reference to the accounts given by ancient and modern travelers, among whom, for the reader's satisfaction or consultation, I may name, the old merchant Ralph Fitch, the envoys Symes, Crawford, and Yule, the missionaries Saggermano and Judson, and the British officers Cox and Snodgrass.

William Dalton.

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THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

MY PARENTAGE AND EARLY ADVENTURES.

My name is Oliver, Harry Oliver; I was born in Rangoon, the chief sea-port of the Burman Empire, which, until the English annexed the great provinces of Arracan, Chittagong, Assam, and the kingdom of Pegu (no small portion, you will find, if you glance at the map of Asia), was the largest and most warlike of those nations which, although from being geographically situated between India and China, are known as Indo-Chinese kingdoms, are in fact near akin to the great Malayan race which originally peopled the greater portion of the lands in, and bordering, the mighty Pacific Ocean.

My father, who for many years before my birth had been settled in Rangoon as a merchant, had by his large dealing in teak timber and the petroleum, or natural earth-oil of the country, not only realized a considerable property, but by his honest dealings and kindly manners acquired the respect of his fellow merchants and the regard of the King's brother, the Prince of Prome, who, as lord, or what the Burmese

call "cater," of the largest teak forest, was the greatest timber merchant in the empire. As the prince resided chiefly at Ava, the capital, my father frequently visited his highness, with the double purpose of business and pleasure—namely, buying the beforementioned productions, and hunting tigers and elephants in the wild country to the west of the capital.

The Burmese are one of the most warlike of Asiatic nations, and for centuries, so successful had they been in conquering neighboring states that their arrogance and belief in their invincibility knew no bounds; indeed, jealous of the English power in India (of the greatness of which they were as ignorant as of geography), they at one time entertained insane but serious notions not only of driving them from the great presidency of Bengal (a feat popularly supposed to be attended with no great difficulty), but absolutely of marching an army into London, although how they were to pass across the ocean to the white cliffs of Old England, was never very distinctly laid down by the courtiers who propounded the plan.

One of the kingdoms with which the "Golden Foot," as the King of Ava is termed, was at war, some years prior to the first war with the English, was Laos, a country situate between Burma and Siam. At the time when the contest between the Burmese and the Laosians was at its greatest height, my father happened to be paying a visit to the Prince of Prome at Ava. A party of Burmese soldiers succeeded in plundering one of the chief towns of the enemy, and brought many prisoners to the capital. Among these

was a Laosian lady, whom my father purchased from her captors and married.—That lady was my mother.

Such being my birth, you will not be astonished at finding the ease with which I made myself at home among the semi-barbarous Burmans, or took to an adventurous career, for you know "what is bred in the bone will not come out of the flesh." Neither must you be surprised at the adventures themselves; for truly, I can verify of my own knowledge that not only are there many lands and peoples of which our all knowing countrymen are yet ignorant, but that every day strange adventures happen in various parts of the world to persons who having neither time, inclination, nor taste to record them in book shape, a vast amount of entertainment, experience, and instruction becomes lost to the world.

As my father was determined that his son should grow up with the muscles and mind of an Englishman, and far from the temptations and bad influence of Rangoon (which town is to China and Siam what Boulogne is to England—namely the rendezvous or depôt for insolvent debtors who have run away from their creditors), he sent me to London, consigned to the care of his only parent, my grandmother; not, however, without a great, though loving battle, with my mother, who, at length gave her sanction to my departure, provisionally, that my native nurse should accompany me to England.

Matters being thus arranged, the nurse was smuggled on board the ship in a large earthenware jar, for it is against the law for a native woman to leave the coun-

try; I followed, and after a rough and very long passage—for steamships were then unknown—my nurse and myself were carefully packed in an old hackney-coach which stood in readiness in the East India Docks, and we were shortly afterward delivered over to the charge of my grandmother.

Now although it may seem disrespectful on my part, I cannot but believe that my troubles dated from the time of my arrival; for so great was my aged relative's dislike to foreigners, all of whom she thought to be created for the especial annoyance of Mr. and Mrs. John Bull, and to "that nasty negro-woman," as she persisted in calling my blotting-paper-tinted, but good-natured nurse, that to the time of my being sent "out of her way" (for that was the term she used for sending me to boarding-school), a day never passed without her giving me a good snubbing; indeed, although I am bound to admit, it might have been in consequence of my undutiful and wild (for you will keep in memory that by birth I am half a savage) behavior, I never felt happy with my grandmother. One reason was, perhaps, that she persisted in calling my dear mother a black woman, although but for the peculiar twist of her short nose, and the tone of her voice, which made me understand that she intended it as an opprobrious epithet, I could not for the life of me comprehend why a black woman should not be as good as a white woman.

As, however, you will care less to hear of my childhood than the adventures of my youth, which it is my purpose to relate, I will simply inform you

that the few years passed in England were the most unhappy of my life; therefore you may imagine my delight when, on the very day I completed my thirteenth year, the day after the "break-up" of the last half at "Marathon House," Fulham, I received a letter from my father, ordering me to return to Rangoon by the first outward-bound ship.

Oh, how my heart bounded! It was the first "break-up" that I really enjoyed. How jolly I was when I made one of the fourth coach-load of boys going home for the holidays!

"Farewell hedges! Farewell ditches!
Farewell all the Fulham witches!"

still rings in my ears, as on that cold winter's day, when these lines, which tradition stated to have been composed as a half-yearly anthem by some former head of the first form, were poured forth from the throats of my homeward bound schoolmates.

Then the bustle of preparation for my voyage—the tedious three months to wait before I could get a ship. Then, when the day came for my departure, and the old hackney-coach that was to carry me, my old nurse, and the baggage to the dock, stood at the door, how my heart leaped for joy—indeed I almost loved my cross old grandmother—God bless the old lady's memory, for after all, perhaps it was her rheumatism that made her so queer-tempered.

Once on board, and the white cliffs of England fading from my sight, my whole mind was bent forward, thousands of miles across the great ocean to

my father and mother's home, and for months my mind was thus stretched with anxiety, for in those days a voyage to the East was long and dangerous enough to form an epoch in a life.

Tedious as our voyage would have been under ordinary circumstances, it was rendered doubly so, as when the ship arrived off Madras, the captain was induced to convey a large quantity of stores to the Great Andaman, an island, which at that time, had not been many years chosen as a settlement, or penal colony, to which to send convicts from Bengal. By the way, you may remember that this island was originally chosen as the place of banishment of the last of the Great Moguls, the aged king of Delhi, but who has since been transported to the opposite coast of Rangoon.

Having shipped the stores, we again set sail, and in five days sighted the Great and Little Cocoa Islands, two small tracts of land which, although abounding with luxuriant cocoa trees, are so flat and swampy and destitute of fresh water, that they are uninhabited. Once, indeed, some adventurers settled upon one of the islands with the hope of making a fortune by expressing oil from the cocoa-nut; but the scheme was rendered abortive by the climate, which speedily destroyed one half of the party, and drove the remainder from the island in despair.

Passing between the southernmost Cocoa and the north side of the Great Andaman, the captain, who had never before touched at the latter islands, kept a sharp look-out for the harbor, within which, upon a

small island, is situated the British settlement of Port Cornwallis.

The next day, late in the afternoon, we made out an opening in the land, when the captain, notwithstanding it was not laid down in his chart, believing it to be the harbor, sent out a boat-party of six Lascars and two Europeans to make soundings, and survey the opening. Scarcely, however, had the party proceeded half a mile from the ship than a northeast wind set in, which drove them forward with fearful velocity.

"That boat will never live in such a gale," said the captain, alarmed, and straining his eyes toward the littte craft, which, however, seemed to bear up bravely against the hurricane.

"Hurrah! they have made the harbor, if harbor it is," cried the mate.

Suddenly the heavens grew dark as midnight; every object more than fifty yards from the ship became obscured from our view, so nothing could be done but to wait patiently the return of the boat party.

Our curiosity was not to be gratified that night, for as hours passed, the boat remained absent; that, however, was not to be wondered at, for so great was the darkness, and so strongly did the wind blow in shore that no boat could have reached the ship. All, then, we could do was to commiserate the poor fellows for the long night they would pass on land, at the risk of being overpowered by the savage natives, and await patiently the return of daylight.

But imagine the consternation of all on board the next morning, when, although the winds had become hushed, and the sky clear—so clear that we could now with the naked eye trace the whole coast, nay, even the summit of the Saddle Peak Mountains, the dense forests, and moreover the small dark figures of the natives clambering among the rocks, no traces whatever of the boat or her crew were visible.

Many were the surmises as to the cause.

"The lubbers have deserted," said one sailor.

"They have been dashed through some narrow channel, and carried away by the current," said another.

"These savage Andamanners are cannibals; they eat men raw," said the mate.

"Yes, without cooking, I've heerd say," put in the purser's mate, a young cockney on his first voyage.

"The savages it is," exclaimed the captain, thought fully; then adding to the mate, "Man a boat, Mr. Jones; we may yet be in time to save the poor fellows."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the mate; and in a minute or so a boat was alongside filled with a dozen men armed with cutlasses and pistols.

This was the first occasion of my spirit taking fire; for no sooner did I hear this order than gliding down the hatchways into my berth, I snatched up a double-barrelled gun, which I had bought as a present for my father, and had learned to use upon the voyage, and running up to the captain, said, as I touched my cap after the fashion of the two midshipmen on board, "I join, sir."

"Go to your cabin, sir," was the disagreeable reply.

"I join, sir," I repeated, for my blood was up.

"Take this lad below," said the uncompromising captain, as he went forward.

That going forward, however, was my opportunity; for no sooner was his face turned from me than I was over the sides and in the boat, which was manned and awaiting the mate.

"Blow me if this isn't mutiny," said Davis the cockswain; but as he laughed, as if in admiration of my boldness, I took courage.

"Let me lie down astern till Mr. Jones is on board," said I; and the sailors, who always admire pluck, made way for me.

Mr. Jones came into the boat, and I remained in the sternsheets without his knowledge till we had reached within half a mile of the shore, when seeing it crowded with natives, whose vociferations, antics, and the bows, spears, and other primitive weapons which they flourished defiantly, evinced sufficient proof of their hostile intentions, he said, "Look ahead, lads; the varmint mean mischief."

No sooner was this caution delivered than, burning with indignation at the sight of the wretches who I believed had killed and eaten the boat's crew, I was upon my knees with my gun hanging over the side.

"How came you here, you young rascal?" exclaimed the mate, with an accompaniment that made my ears tingle, and sent me full length in the bottom of the boat.

You will think this rather a disgraceful commencement for one who was to become the hero of many adventures; but in justification of Mr. Jones, I am bound to admit that I fully merited the punishment, for by an accident had my piece discharged, it would have brought our expedition to a premature termination.

As it was, by judiciously hiding the arms, and the waving of handkerchiefs as we reached the shore, the natives sufficiently understood our pacific intentions to so far alter their warlike attitude, that we hoped to effect a landing without molestation—a hope, however, that became a little dimmed when upon nearer view we saw what might have been easily mistaken for a tribe from Pandemonium.

There, stretching almost in a straight line along the shore, stood some four or five hundred bipeds; they could scarcely be likened to human beings, the tallest of whom did not reach five feet, perfectly naked, with skeleton limbs, large protuberant stomachs, high shoulders, great unshapely heads covered with woolly hair, dyed with red ochre, sooty black skins plastered over with mud, flat noses, thick lips, and small red eyes which glistened over their famine-stricken countenances; moreover, armed with small bows of bamboo and strings of the fibre of a tree, with reed arrows headed with fish-bone, spears of heavy wood sharply pointed, and shields made of bark; all of whom, as we neared the shore, we could hear chattering together like so many monkeys.

"Rest on your oars, my lads; the brutes mean

mischief," said the mate, as he saw these armed savages coming down to the water's edge.

"Let's try 'em with this here; it's pretty," said the cockswain, as he held up a tobacco-box of shining brass.

"Or a knife," said a sailor.

"Or a few buttons," said another; each as he spoke holding the article above his head.

"Ay, ay, presents it is, my lads," said the mate, collecting the articles named and leaping ashore.

The hasty step Mr. Jones had taken was an imprudent one; for scarcely had his feet touched the shingles upon the beach than an arrow whistling within an inch of his head grazed the arm of a sailor behind, who smarting with pain and indignation, at once discharged his musket at one of the savages, who fell dead.

The mate swore terribly at the sailor for his imprudence. As for myself, I trembled for the consequences, now war had been declared, and we were in the midst of hundreds of enraged savages; indeed our escape was miraculous. The scene that followed the report of the gun and the death of the savage, I can only compare to the sudden death from a fowling-piece of one of a flock of young rooks, who will hover and whirl above their dead companion for some time in consternation, regardless of the risk of losing their own lives.

So it was with the savages, who evidently had never before heard the report of a gun, for at the sound they placed their fingers in their ears, and ap

peared half stunned; then they hovered around their fallen companion in wonderment at so singular a death; but, as if suddenly comprehending that the man who could have killed him at so great a distance, and by means of a loud noise and a puff of smoke, could be no other than the malignant fiend of the storm, in whom they believed, the whole tribe took to their heels and fled as fast as their legs would carry them into the dense forest which skirts and partly covers the mountains.

"It's lucky the brutes mistook you for the old 'un hisself, or that ere shot o' yours'd cost every man Jack on us the number of his mess," said an old sailor to the man who had fired the gun.

"Mayhaps because there isn't enough on 'em they have gone to fetch some of their relations to help 'em," said the cockswain, Davis.

"No, no, the varmint have had such a fright with the gun they wont return in a hurry," replied the mate.

"Howsomdever, we had better look pretty sharp, sir, as they may get over the novelty of the thing."

"Right, Davis; so just hold on with half a dozen of the lads while we search yonder bay—if bay it is," said the mate.

"Bay!" said Davis, while the men were preparing to follow. "To my thinking the skipper's out in his reckoning, for as far as I can make out, yonder opening is neither a harbor or a bay, but just a creek."

"You are right, Davis; it is neither, and it is a creek," replied the mate, looking through his glass

at the opening which, as far as we could make out, appeared to be about a mile along the coast; adding "then the boat-party must have fallen into the hands of these black devils. So forward, my lads; as for you, youngster, as you seem fond of the smell of powder, you may stay with the boat, or follow, as you please."

The latter being addressed to me, I chose to go with the search-party. In all, our number consisted of six well-armed men, for I counted myself as a man. We proceeded stealthily along the shore, keeping a good lookout on all sides, till we had proceeded about half a mile, when, as the land abutted out to a great distance into the sea, and the mate wanted to make a short cut to the creek, he led us through a dense jungle. Clearing this without meeting with any other obstruction than swarms of annoying insects, rotting trees, deep pools of pestilential water, a few snakes, and now and then a stray hog, we came to a clearing, when the mate cried out,

"Keep a sharp lookout, my lads. Yonder is the lair of some wild beast."

With fingers upon triggers we approached the place pointed out by the mate. It was not very ingeniously constructed, even for the work of a wild animal; for it consisted of only four sticks stuck in the ground, fastened at the top and crossed transversely by others, the whole being covered with leafy branches of the palm-tree.

"This ain't the lair of no wild beast, but the hut of one of them savages," said a sailor, as we crept

stealthily into the place, adding with a shudder, as he caught sight of a string of skulls and other bones suspended from the roof, "Lord have mercy on us! The devils have made quick work with our mates. We hadn't need look any further. Lord have mercy upon us!"

"Dick, you lubber, these are the bones of hogs and turtles," said the mate; adding "however, this hut will do for a rendezvous, so hoist a rag that we can all see, and let us search in different directions."

Accordingly several handkerchiefs were tied together and hoisted upon a long pole from the top of the hut. Two men were left in charge of the station two others proceeded to the east, while the mate and myself went in the direction of the creek, in search of the missing crew; it being understood that the report of a gun should be the signal for the rallying together again of our whole party.

Beating our way through the tall jungle, yet keeping as near the sea as possible, we continued our journey for some two hours; and so wild and desolate was the surrounding scenery that, but for positive evidence to the contrary, we should have concluded the island to have been uninhabited. At length, we reached the supposed creek; it proved, however, to be a channel, which, as it became wider as it ran inland and stretched beyond our vision, we felt assured must run its course through the island. This was disheartening; still, reluctant to give up all hope of finding the missing party—who might be resting,

either as prisoners or guests, in some savage village yet to be discovered—we kept our course along the shore of the channel. As, however, we were making our way through some tall bamboo-shoots, the mate called out, "Listen!—footsteps! lie down."

Simultaneously falling upon our hands and knees, through the canes we saw two savages approaching toward the channel: they were young women, meagre and half famished in appearance, with baskets of a rough kind of wickerwork slung across their backs, and carrying in their hands short spears. Having reached the water's edge they crouched stealthily like cats, each poising her spear between her fingers, to which we could now perceive it was attached by a fibrous string; thus for some few minutes each watched the leaping fish with gleaming eyes, and awaited the opportunity of a good aim. At length a spear was darted forth, and a fish transfixed as it jumped from the water; and when, after this manner they had filled their baskets with a day's provision for their husbands and families, with lightened steps, and eyes glistening at the prospect of a meal (for it is only at certain seasons of the year that these poor and more than half-starved Andamaners can procure even the luxury of fish), they left the creek. But they were hungered, and at a few yards' distance stopped to prepare and indulge in a temporary meal. So collecting some dried underwood, and having, by means of a flint which they carried with them, kindled a fire, the fish was thrown into the flames; but before it had time to become warmed throughout, the fam-

ished creatures snatched them out again and began to tear them with their claw-like fingers.

Their evidently long-looked-for repast was, however, suddenly interrupted by a dark-skinned man, who, darting forth from behind a crag of rock, with two rapid blows from a thick stick stretched the poor creatures upon the earth, after which he began to unfasten the baskets from their shoulders. Need I tell you my felings at that moment? No—for right or wrong, and without stopping to consider the prudence of the act, I discharged my gun, when the fellow giving one loud yell, fell stretched upon the earth.

As for the mate, although he swore at my imprudence, with one leap he bounded toward the fallen coward. At the moment of my firing, the women were about crawling upon their hands and feet, as if by that means they could escape their enemy. The report of the gun, however, so shocked them that they fell flat upon their faces, and thrust their fingers into their ears as if it had been the shock of doom.

"Don't let them escape, youngster. Let them see we are friends—show them their fish," said the mate.

Snatching up the basket of fish I ran forward to the poor creatures and held it forth, making signs for them to take it. Recovering from the shock they arose to their feet, and with eager staring eyes one ventured to approach me, held out her hand, then withdrew, and it was not until after many efforts I could satisfy her of my friendly intentions. Indeed,

I believe they would have both scampered off had they not been convinced, by seeing their enemy with his arms bound by a neckerchief, dragged forward by the mate. Perceiving this, however, they capered about with joy and gratitude, uttering sounds more like those of wild beasts than any thing human.

"We must secure these women, for by their means we may discover the fate of the boat-party," said the mate.

To talk about securing these two savages was one thing, to do it another. Fortunately, however, the report of the gun had alarmed our party, whom at that moment we saw coming through the jungle. At their appearance the women trembled with fear, and would have escaped but for two words the prisoner spoke to them in their own language—if such miserable sounds could be called a language—and in another minute they were surrounded, so that they could not escape.

When the prisoner saw himself surrounded by the English sailors, he trembled violently, and in supplicating tones addressed the mate in a language then unknown to me.

"Can any of you lads make out this fellow's lingo?" said the mate.

"Ay, ay, sir; it is Hindoostanee. "I've picked up enough to make him out," said a man named Thompson, who had been many years in the Indian navy.

"Ask him who he is, and how he came here?"

Taking time to remember words sufficient, Thomp

son put the question. Then, after a labored attempt on both sides to comprehend each other, he said,—

"He says he's a Sepoy, from Bengal, unjustly transported to the British settlement, from which he managed to escape three months ago, since which he has been wandering about the jungle."

"Ask him how far we are from the settlement."

"Having put the question, Thompson replied, "All I can make out is, we are ten miles too far south."

"Ask him if he knows any thing of the boat-party."

Thompson obeyed; the man gesticulated vehemently.

"What does the fellow mean by all those antics?" said the mate.

"Nothing, sir, 'cept he won't open his jaws any more without the sahib will promise not to give him up to the commander of the settlement."

"Promise him, for we can't remain ashore all night."

Thompson obeyed.

"Now, what says he?" added the mate.

"Why, sir, that he seed the party enter the opening of the channel; and that when they entered, the gale blew so that the current must have swept them through the passage."

"It is what I feared," said the mate; adding "ask him whether it isn't likely the savages may have fallen upon them, and that they are hidden somewhere on this island."

Having put the question, Thompson replied,

"All I can make out of the nigger, sir, is, that p'raps they are and p'raps they ain't; but them two black gals is the wives of two chiefs; and so he says, if you takes 'em on board you can keep 'em there till you find out by dumb motions, when you can keep one on board and send t'other ashore, to bargain for giving up the boat's crew; that is, if so be that the savages have got 'em."

"A sensible suggestion it is," said the mate. "Now ask the rascal why he attacked these two women."

Having again put the question, Thompson said,

"He says he has been many days without food, or the means of procuring it, and that he did not intend to harm the women, but took the fish and spear in order to support himself for the future."

"Down to the boat, then," said the mate, now convinced nothing more could be done. As for the women, when, in order to prevent their escape, we secured their arms, you cannot imagine their piteous cries; turning, however, a deaf ear to their wailings we hastened to the boat, and having embarked our prisoners were soon again on board the ship.

When the mate made his report, the captain, anxious to obtain information about the missing crew, attempted by a series of dumb motions, by kindness, by offers of fish and other food, and the aid of the Sepoy, to obtain some information from the two women about his missing men. Whether from fear or obstinacy I know not, but that night they continued dumb. Hoping, therefore, better things the next

morning, the captain appropriated to their use a cabin next his own, and further ordered the wife of the steward to supply them plentifully with fish and cocoa-nut, and moreover, to stay with them till morning.

That night, as you may imagine, after my day's fatigue, I could have slept without turning in my berth. Before, however, the morning, there was a great commotion in the ship. The two savages had cunningly watched till the stewardess was asleep, when, running through the captain's cabin, at one leap through the stern window they were overboard, and swimming to the shore, and of course, as no person on board wished to harm the poor creatures by firing shot, it was the last we saw of them; and so we lost all chance of hearing of our lost shipmates, at least till some time after reaching Rangoon, when we were shocked to hear that when the boat entered the channel the violence of the wind and the strength of the current swept her onward into the Bay of Bengal, where eighteen days afterward she was picked up by a merchantman; and it was discovered that two of the Lascars had been killed and eaten by their companions, an incident which, for the sake of my own veracity, I must tell you is recorded in sober veritable history.

The next day, by steering to the southward, we reached Chatham Island, and a more beautiful spot I have never since seen. The scene is wild and incomparably grand—the harbor is one vast sheet of water, landlocked upon all sides, but dotted with small

islands, while lofty mountains, clothed with impenetrable forests, and inhabited by none but monkeys, guanas, and many of the other animals common to tropical forests.

At this settlement we were so hospitably received by the authorities that, having delivered the stores, it was with considerable regret we set sail for Rangoon, at which city we arrived after a rough voyage of seven days

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST REAL TROUBLE.

I SHALL never forget the sensation of pleasure I felt as our gallant ship anchored in Rangoon roadstead. I was about to rejoin my parents; my heart bounded with delight. Would they be surprised at my manly appearance? How great would be their joy! Should I know them; would they recognize their son? I would play them a trick; for when they came on board, as I felt sure they would, I would gaze at them and await their recognition. All this, however, was very foolish, as days must elapse before my eyes could rest upon them. Those days, however, passed; but oh, how painful was the strain upon my patience!

It was night when we entered the roads; lights were visible upon the beach. The next morning we could see the long streak of low land, but it was sickening to me to find the land was so much further off than it had appeared the previous evening. But patience; patience, indeed, for our captain kept us waiting for a pilot eight days—now standing off, now on, the shore, making short tacks in the daytime, and again anchoring during the night, and all uselessly, for notwithstanding our signal guns and colors, none came off.

At length even the captain's patience overcame his caution; the wind was fair, so sending a boat ashore and steering by landmarks, we dashed across the sand bar and entered the Rangoon river, when our progress, although slow, was sure.

The river was covered with boats, some like those used by the South Sea islanders—long, narrow, with elevated stern ornamented with peacocks' feathers and the tails of Thibetan cows, affixed to long flexible painted poles which hung from the stern, and was surmounted by a golden ball. Others with sails like balloons, and hulls so low in the water that they had the appearance of so many giant butterflies.

Another day, and we had answered the inquiries of the officials of the Custom-house, and laid the ship alongside the wharf. Then how my hopes, anxieties, and fears increased! Neither father nor mother were awaiting my arrival; no person came on board making anxious inquiries. Thinking, dreaming, expecting, I stood looking into the faces of the crowd which thronged the wharf till my eyes ached—nay, more, became damp with tears of bitterest disappointment. There assembled, were people of all nations—Burmans, Peguers, Chinese, Armenians, Siamese, Portuguese, and Englishmen; tradesmen, laborers, missionaries, and merchants; but among them all not one who cared one jot for me who had traveled so many thousands of miles to rejoin all I loved in the world, or valued me at the price of a bundle of the rattans on deck.

I sat upon a coil of rope, with my eyes fixed to the

shore, unheeding the bustle upon deck, as melancholy, as resignedly as if I had been the sole inhabitant of a drowning world. Suddenly my arm was clutched; the words, "My poor boy!" fell on my ears. I started, tears of joy rolled down my face—I had not, then, been forgotten—my parent stood before me. Upon the instant I thought—I hoped so. One glance, however; and pushing him from me, I exclaimed—

"You are not my father;" and the bitterness of my disappointment, the expression of my features, brought tears into the eyes of the stranger, who then kindly taking my hands between his own, said—

"Be calm, listen; I know your story, my poor boy."

"My parents! tell me of my parents. Why, oh, why are they not here?" I said passionately.

"Your parents are—"

"What!" and I started with affright; for a flash of light, a shock like that from a galvanic battery, shot through my mind.

"They are in a better world—dead," he said mournfully.

"Dead, dead!" I exclaimed, stupified, but—Can I paint my feelings at that moment? No, it is impossible. I threw myself upon the deck and sobbed in impotent sorrow.

The stranger spoke not a word for many minutes. God was good to me, for with a deep sensitiveness he had also implanted in my heart a feeling of resignation to his will. I recovered my presence of mind, and forming a resolution to quit that hateful country as soon as possible, in silent sorrow permitted the

stranger to lead me from the ship. We passed through the suburbs to the inner town on foot to his house, where, as soon as the first outburstings of my grief had become softened, he told me that my parents had died but three months before my arrival—of fever, in Ava, at which capital they had been some time resident.

"Oh, that I had been permitted but to arrive soon enough to soothe their last moments," said I.

"It would indeed have been a consolation to them; while to you, my poor boy, it would have been fortune."

"What mean you, sir?" I said, astonished at these words.

"Had you been with them at the time of their death, you might have taken quick possession of your father's property."

"My father's property," I repeated, not understanding why I could not take possession as it was.

"It has been seized by the Myo-wun" (governor of the town).

"Surely this cannot be possible; for am I not my father's heir?"

"Unfortunately, my poor boy, any thing is possible in this barbarous land that it may please the chiefs to do."

"But there are laws even here."

"True; and one is, that the property of any foreigner who may die without heirs shall immediately fall to the King of Burma."

"But my father did not die without an heir. Am I not living?"

"Your father was rich, my poor boy, and his riches were chiefly accumulated by the favor of his friend, the Prince of Prome; therefore, no sooner did the king hear of his death than, assuming that you were not in existence, he ordered the Myo-wun to seize any property he might have possessed in this country."

"But you say his majesty's brother, the Prince of Prome, was my poor father's friend; if so, he will not permit his only son to be thus plundered."

"It is a poor chance, yet your only one; for death buries friendship, and the Prince of Prome loves gold; still, I have communicated to his highness your existence, and as a friend of your father's, prayed of him to restore to you the property."

"His answer?" I asked, impatiently.

"May be many weeks before it arrives here," replied Mr. Johnson (for that was the name of my new friend); "adding "In the meantime, you must make my house your own."

Thus was I, who had gone out from England with a buoyant heart, great hopes, and a fair prospect, left suddenly alone in the world in a far-distant country, penniless, and dependent upon a stranger for my daily bread. But deeply as I felt Mr. Johnson's kindness, and gratefully as I accepted his offer, I at the same time was of far too independent, and I trust honorable, a spirit, not to offer to make myself as useful to him as possible in his counting-house, a

return which he gladly accepted; and so I soon found myself deep in the mercantile mysteries of the natural products of the empire—such as teak timber, cardamoms, indigo, elephants' teeth, saffron wood, and that petroleum or earth-oil by which my father had realized a fortune.

Day by day I awaited to hear from the Prince of Prome. Messenger after messenger was sent to the capital city by Mr. Johnson, but without obtaining any thing more substantial than vague promises. Thus anxiously passed two years; a period which I did not permit to escape without assiduously applying myself to the study of the Burmese language.

As, however, this town in which I passed those anxious twenty-four months, is, I believe, something totally different from any town you have either visited or read about, I will endeavor to give you a sketch of its peculiarities.

Rangoon, which signifies "peace effected," and was so named by its founder, the King Alompra, who built the city in memory of his conquest of Pegu, which till his time was an independent kingdom, consists of two towns, one within the other, situated twenty miles from the sea, up the river Syriam, a branch of the great Irrawaddi which traverses through the entire empire; and, rising to a considerable height above water level, these towns are comparatively free from the terrible inundations common to other Burman cities and villages during the rainy season.

The inner town, or fort, in which the European

merchants and natives of importance had their residences, was encompassed by a stockade; that is, a tall bamboo paling, eighteen feet high, which was again surrounded by a deep dirty ditch. Around the inner side of the stockade ran a platform for musketeers, upon which were placed twelve miserable cannon. To give you a notion of the interior, which was then populated by some 30,000 people, I must ask you to picture to yourself a vast city of human hutches, made of bamboos, and erected upon posts three feet from the ground, with pools of stagnant water beneath, but regularly arranged in nicely paved streets, intersected by gutters, across which were thrown planks for the convenience of pedestrians. A large herd of pigs, independent and ownerless, which, but that they acted as scavengers by devouring the refuse matter beneath the city, would have been as insufferable as the hundreds of ugly little yelping, barking cur dogs which ever infest the streets of Rangoon, to the annoyance of the merchant who may be pursuing his affairs, or getting between the legs, to the monstrous disturbance of the shaven-pated priests, who, wrapped around with an ample yellow sheet, with a fan of the palm leaf in one hand, and a large blue lacquered box in the other, perambulate the streets, with eyes turned neither to the right nor to the left, but fixed upon the ground, to gather from the venerating multitude the daily food for themselves and their brethren of the Kioums, or monasteries—food, by the way, which must be placed in the box ready cooked; for the lives of these holy personages

being given up to abstract speculations upon the divine essence of their god Gaudama, it would be regarded as an impious waste of time for them to cook with their own hands.

Then imagine a would-be civilized population, half naked, the garments of the higher classes consisting chiefly of a double piece of cloth loosely wrapped about the body, a slight frock with sleeves, and a handkerchief tied around the brow for a head-dress, with bodies tattooed or imprinted with lions, tigers, monkeys, hogs, crows, demons, or fabulous animals—a style of bodily decoration which, although performed by the painful operation of puncturing the skin with a needle dipped in paint, is, notwithstanding, so fashionable that many of the professionals in that peculiar line of art obtain large sums of money for their services. Then, as for their teeth ("although the fashion of blackening them is not so common as in former ages), they are invariably of a sooty hue from their constant practice of chewing the areca, or betel-nut.

One custom, however, which struck me as being comical in a high degree, was that of boring in the lobe of the ear a large hole, in which (according to an individual's wealth or position), he or she stuffs a gold, silver, paper gilt, or wooden ornament; and invariably, when the aperture is not otherwise occupied, men, women, and boys, use it as a cigar-holder; that is, suppose they are interrupted in the enjoyment of the cigar, they as instantly clap the unburned portion within the ear as a butcher, when

making use of both his hands, places his knife in his mouth. Then, although none wear shoes, boots, or stockings, and not always sandals, few are to be seen without the *tee*, or umbrella, the color and material of which (white being exclusively royal) marks the rank or office in every class of society.

Such was the town and such the people among whom I impatiently and anxiously awaited two whole years. As I have said, my time was chiefly occupied in Mr. Johnson's business, or in studying the language. Moreover, at our house, which was near the Exchange, where the Europeans assembled in the cool of the morning, and also to the Go-down, or Custom-house, we were seldom without society. Then, again, we mixed in the society of the higher class natives; indeed, so popular at one time was Mr. Johnson, that we had the *entrée* to the family parties of the governor himself—that governor who, forgetful that we had "eaten his salt," afterward became our tyrant and persecutor.

The first of those parties was to me so comical, and will, I believe, prove so interesting to you, that I will relate the events of the day.

On the 12th of April, the last day of the Burman year, Mr. Johnson and myself were invited to bear a part in a sport that is universally practiced throughout the Burman dominions on the concluding day of their annual cycle. To wash away the impurities of the past, and commence the new year free from stain, the women on this day are accustomed to throw water on every man they meet, and the men have

the privilege of retorting—a licence which, as you may imagine, gives rise to a great deal of fun, particularly amongst the young women, who, armed with long syringes and flagons, endeavor to throw water over any man who passes, and in return receive the water with perfect good humor. But you must be told that dirty water must not be thrown, nor must a man or boy lay his hands upon a woman or girl; moreover, if a woman declines to take part in the sport, she must not be molested, for it is taken for granted that she is ill.

Well, on that 12th of April, about one hour before sun-down, we went to the house of the governor, and found his wife had provided to give us a damp reception, for in the hall there were rows of water-jars with bowls and ladles ready to hand.

Upon entering the hall we were each presented with a bottle of rose-water, a little of which we poured into the hands of the governor, who sprinkled it over his own vest of fine flowered muslin. The lady then made her appearance at the door, giving us to understand that she did not mean to join in the sport herself, but made her eldest daughter, a pretty child in the arms of a nurse, pour from a golden cup some rose-water, mixed with sandal wood, first over her father and then over us. This was the signal for the commencement of the sport, for which we were prepared by being dressed in white vestments.

About fifteen young women then rushed into the hall from the inner apartments, and surrounding the governor, myself, and Mr. Johnson, deluged us with-

out mercy; and of course, laughing heartily if we appeared at all distressed by the water flung in our faces. At length, all parties being tired, and completely drenched, we went home to change our clothes; and in the way met many damsels, who would willingly have renewed the sport had they received encouragement from us; but truly we had had sufficient for that day, especially as it came from antagonists whom politeness prevented our repaying in full. When we had changed our clothes, we returned to the governor's, and were entertained with a dance and a puppet show till the early hour of morning.

CHAPTER III.

I GET AN INSIGHT INTO BURMESE LAW, AND AM PUT IN THE STOCKS.

During the two years, Mr. Johnson had left no means untried to procure the restoration of my property; and at length my hopes revived, for in consequence of some important service rendered by my friend to the Prince of Prome, that lofty personage had sent to Rangoon a solemn promise to bestir himself in the matter. Unfortunately, however, with the message came the news that a rupture had taken place between the Burmese and English governments, and that the former were preparing to invade Bengal; the consequence of which was that the native authorities at Rangoon, prompted and goaded by the Mussulman, Armenian, and other traders who were jealous of the Europeans, began to subject the latter to every possible petty annoyance, and to such an extent that meetings of English and Americans were held at the Exchange to consider what measures were to be taken to protect themselves from insult, if not from injury.

"These semi-savages will never rest till they find an excuse for murdering us," said Mr. Johnson, one morning, when we had returned from a meeting at the Exchange, and were awaiting a fish tiffin, or luncheon, which my old nurse was preparing.

"Nay, sir, surely that is not possible; they must fear the English power too much," said I.

"They fear nothing; they are eaten up with arrogance and pride; and no wonder, for a nation who have ever been conquerors and never conquered, can't comprehend a power they have never felt. Even now it is said that a vast army is being prepared, not only for the conquest of Bengal, but, as they arrogantly believe, England itself."

"Why, they have no ships."

"No, but they have hundreds of war-boats, which, in their ignorance of geography, and whether England is an island or even a distant portion of Asia, they stupidly believe to be all-sufficient."

"Bah! this is absolute nonsense," said I, laughing.

"It is so, as far as even the conquest of the neighboring English territory in Bengal; but at the same time enough to exhibit the feeling of the officials, and lead them to commit any outrage upon those of our countrymen within their power."

While we were conversing, our attention was drawn to a great noise in the street. It was the public disgrace and punishment of a priest who, with his face daubed with black paint, interspersed with white, and seated upon an ass, was being drummed out of the city amid the shoutings of a crowd so numerous, that it was with difficulty the criminal was saved from being crushed to death by the exertions of the attending constables, or Pa-Kwets.

These officials, who are to be found in every city in the empire, are chosen from the most atrocious

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criminals, who have been pardoned in consideration of their assuming for the rest of their lives the vocations of constables, gaolers, and executioners, without other pay or reward than what they may be enabled to extort from their miserable prisoners. Upon each cheek they have branded a ring, which implies they must have been guilty of some great crime, punishable by the laws with death. Further, their naked breasts are tattooed with their especial offence, such as man-killer, or thief. So infamous are these pa kwets held, that even in the fulfilment of their duties they are not permitted to enter within the walls of a house; nor can their bodies be burned and have performed over them the usual funeral rites, but they are interred like lepers.

Suddenly, however, while we were standing outside the house watching these miserable men, a large cat, of the half-tailed Malay breed, darted past us, with a partly roasted fish in its mouth, followed by my nurse exclaiming,

"The thief! The thief has stolen my fish."

"There goes our tiffin, Harry," said Mr. Johnson, laughing; but, adding, as he pointed to one of the constables, "Look! the eye of that rascally pa-kwet is upon her; he means mischief."

Alarmed at the possibility of danger to my nurse, I ran after her; and as puss had managed to effect her escape with the fish, found no small difficulty in persuading her to return to the house and serve up the tiffin as best she could without fish.

The following three days after this adventure with

the cat and the fish, (which, although at the time I thought so humorous, proved to be of serious consequence) were occupied by witnessing the singular ceremony of burning a deceased priest.

The holy man having died two years before, his body had, at the house in which he died, undergone the following process of embalming:—

The intestines being removed, and replaced with various fragrant spices, and the opening sewn up, the body was covered first with a layer of wax, to prevent the admission of air; then a layer of lac, mixed with other ingredients; and lastly, a coating of leaf-gold. The body being thus prepared and gilded, was stretched at full length, with the arms over the breast, and then left in the house in which death had taken place, for twelve months.

At the end of that period the body was removed to a house erected on purpose, in the shape of a kioum or monastery, about thirty feet high, and covered with leaf-gold, where it remained till the order was given for its being consumed, twelve months afterward. A month before the burning took place a stage was erected of bamboo, and by its side placed a coffin, decorated with gold and figures of many kinds, but all emblematic of death in its various forms.

In the courtyard of the house were preparing two large four-wheeled carriages, one for the coffin, the other for the stage, with its apparatus. The carriage in which the corpse was to be drawn had another stage erected upon it, similar to the one in the house,

but of larger size, and fixed upon an artificial kneeling elephant.

When the time appointed for the ceremony grew near, the principal people in every street, were commanded each to prepare the figure of a buffalo, bull, lion, bear, rhinoceros, elephant, or man; as also a large rocket, which, at the proper time, was to be affixed to the figure. On the first day of the ceremony these artificial animals, which were three times the size of life, were drawn around the town in procession, accompanied by the whole of the inhabitants, male and female, interspersed with flag-bearers, dancing boys and girls, and rows of young women, with an elder woman between each row to keep order.

The next day came the most singular, and to a European ridiculous, portion of the ceremony. In an open space in the middle of a valley, the people were assembled. One of the carriages now held the stage upon which was placed the coffin containing the body; a cable was fastened to each wheel of the carriage, when, at a given signal, the multitude divided into opposite parties, one half being at the front and the other at the back of the carriage. The four cables were seized simultaneously by as many as could get hold of them. Then the two parties commenced to pull one against the other, as if struggling which was to get possession of the body, which was now dragged forward, now backward; and in this struggle they continued the whole day without either obtaining the advantage. Near the close of

evening, however, the ropes breaking upon one side, the opposite party claimed the victory.

The next day the artificial animals were drawn forth upon wheels, each with a rocket seven feet in length and four feet in circumference, made of timber secured by iron hoops, and rattan lashings affixed to it; all of which, with a great quantity of fireworks, were discharged toward evening, causing the accidental death of several people. The following day was appointed for the burning. As, however, a quarrel arose between the two parties who had pulled the corpse, the unsuccessful insisting that the cables had been cut, instead of being fairly broken by the other, the viceroy granted another trial of pulling, but the same party came off as victorious as before.

The next day the corpse was placed upon a stage in the middle of a temple erected for the purpose; small rockets were fixed upon ropes with rings of rattan, so as to slide along them from the top of a hill, to which one end of the ropes was fastened to the coffin. At a given signal the rockets were discharged, when, sliding along the ropes to the coffin, which was purposely made of combustible materials, set it on fire, and thus consumed the body with astonishing rapidity.

Having witnessed the conclusion of this strange ceremony, Mr. Johnson and myself walked leisurely back to the town, chatting together upon the advantages and disadvantages of the ancient custom of corpse-burning and urn burial, to which I was decidedly favorable, when, as we approached the house,

imagine my surprise at seeing my nurse with her arms bound, struggling in the hands of two slave constables. Indeed, to such an extent did it anger me, that I believe I should have felled them to the earth but for my friend, who said,

"It is useless, Harry; let us follow to the Rung-d-hau" (Court of Justice).

"But what can have been the poor creature's crime?" said I.

"I know not, Masser Harry—I not know," exclaimed my nurse.

"The miserable woman will hear when she appears before the Praw" (Lord) "of Justice," said one of the constables.

"Let us follow, Harry," said Mr. Johnson; and we proceeded to the Court of Justice, where, surrounded by attendants and suitors, sat the judge, a fat, sinister-looking personage who, being disengaged, ordered the pa-kwet who had to make the charge against the prisoner to be sworn; whereupon, while the Book of Imprecations was held over his head he repeated the following formidable judicial oath:—

"I will speak the truth. If I speak not the truth, may it be through the influence of the laws of demerit—through passion, anger, folly, pride, and hard-heartedness—so that when I and my relations are on land, tigers, elephants, buffaloes, poisonous serpents, scorpions shall seize and crush, and bite us so that we shall certainly die; let the calamities of fire, water, thieves, and enemies oppress and destroy us, till we perish and come to utter destruction; let us be sub-

ject to all the calamities that are within the body, and all that are without the body; may we be seized with madness, dumbness, blindness, deafness, leprosy, and hydrophobia; may we be struck with thunderbolts and lightning, and come to sudden death. In the midst of not speaking truth, may I be taken with vomiting clotted black blood, and suddenly die before the assembled people. When I am going by water, may the water spirits assault me, the boat be upset, and the property lost; and may the alligators, porpoises, sharks, or other sea-monsters seize and crush me to death; and when I change worlds, may I not arrive among men or spirits, but suffer unmixed punishment and regret, in the utmost wretchedness, among the four states of punishment. If I speak the truth, may I and my relations, through the influence of the ten laws of merit, and on account of the efficacy of truth, be freed from all calamities within and without the body; and may evils which have not yet come be warded far away. May the ten calamities and five enemies also be kept far away. May the thunderbolts and lightning, the Nat of the waters, and all sea animals love me, that I may be safe from them. May my prosperity increase like the rising sun and the waxing moon; and may the seven possessions, the seven laws, and the seven merits of the virtuous be prominent in my person; and when I change worlds, may I not go to the four states of punishment, but attain happiness of men and Nats, and realize merit, reward, and perfect calm."

I have given at full length this oath, that you may

form some notion of my terror at the forthcoming charge against my poor nurse. What could it be? Surely a crime of great magnitude; nothing less, indeed, than conspiring the death of the sovereign.

"Now let the slave make his charge against this miserable woman," said the judge.

"Truly, O great praw" (lord), "the woman's crime is not small; for, by permitting the escape of a thief she has defrauded the lords who administer justice of their just fees," said the pa-kwet, falling upon his hands and knees before the official, who then in a stern voice said—

"What says the miserable slave?"

"Truly, it is not possible for thy smallest slave to tell that of which she knows nothing. Surely this man is either a perjurer and deserving the punishments he hath invoked, or he hath mistaken thy slave for another, O mighty praw," replied the trembling woman.

Then having looked at some notes written upon leaves of the palm-tree, the judge said—

"Slave, didst thou not, on the day of the punishment of the priest, rush forth from the house of thy master crying that a thief had robbed thee of thy fish?"

This, then, was the charge; after so terrible an oath, it was too ridiculous, and I laughed aloud, to the disgust of the angry judge, who said—

"Place the vile dog of a colar" (stranger) "in the stocks."

"Pardon, O lord judge," I exclaimed, "but it is

impossible to help laughing; for even if thou hadst the thief before thee, thou couldst get no fees."

"Thou miserable dog of a colar, the thief should be put in the stocks till he or his friends had paid the just dues," said the judge.

But picturing to my mind a cat in the stocks, I had greater difficulty than ever in restraining my laughter, as I replied, "Truly, O judge, it would be a difficult matter, for the thief was a cat."

"The more reason, then, that this miserable woman should be confined till some friend pays the dues; for, even if caught, the cat will not satisfy the claims of justice," said the sapient judge; adding, "Let the woman be placed in the stocks in the sun till twenty ticals have been paid by her friends."

"Release the woman, O judge, and I will fetch the money," said Mr. Johnson.

"Who will be surety that thou wilt return, O colar?"

"That will thy servant, O judge," said I.

"This is reasonable," said the official; adding, however, "Let the youth remain in the stocks also, till the just dues are paid."

Whereupon, the two pa-kwets instantly placed me in limbo; and thus did I obtain my first real experience of Burmese justice. Cruel, however, as was my case, it was mercy itself in comparison with an incident that had occurred a few days previously.

A widow, unable by ordinary means to pay a certain tax, was compelled to sell her only daughter. Receiving the purchase-money with a heavy heart,

she placed it in a box in order that she might give vent to her grief during the night. When, however, she awoke the following morning, she found the whole of the money had been stolen. Distracted she sat at her door giving vent to loud lamentations; during which one of the underlings of the court of justice passed. This man having heard the poor creature's story, repeated it to the judge, who, in fear for the loss of his fees, sapiently commanded her to deliver up the thief. This, however, being impossible, he ordered the woman to be detained in the stocks till some charitable person could be found not only to pay the tax, but also the fees he himself would have received, had the thief been taken.

As, however, cases of even a worse nature than this happened during my residence in Rangoon, and they will serve not only to illustrate the laws of the people, but the value of the institutions under which we live in this country, where the judges, being highly educated, independent of the government during good behavior, and moreover, well paid, have not the necessity, even if they were sufficiently dishonest, to play such disgraceful pranks, I will relate one or two, first telling you that as the judges and other officers of Burma are paid by the contending suitors instead of the government, they encourage litigation, take bribes from both parties, and except in very palpable cases, give their decision in favor of him who gives the greatest sum of money.

An aged Burmese woman in the service of a European merchant, being cited before the Judge for

not having reported to the authorities a theft committed upon herself some three years previously, by which the officials had been deprived of their fees, her master appeared to exonerate her, but was instantly seized by two officers of the court, who told him that, as he had chosen to appear in the affair, he had rendered himself responsible, and could not be released unless some other individual was left in pledge for him. Accordingly he left his servant, a Burmese lad, who had accompanied him to the court. Shortly afterward, returning with the money to pay the fees, he found that the money-squeezing officials had placed the lad in the stocks and squeezed his ankles, until the poor boy gladly gave them a little money he had about his person, and a new handkerchief. The old woman was also in the stocks, but was released without further inquiry as to the theft as soon as the fees had been paid.

Another and more serious case was that of seven Burmans, who, having been condemned to death for sacrilege, were tied to the stake ready for execution. One was fired at several times without being hit. At every shot there was a loud peal of laughter from the bystanders. The criminal was taken down, declared to have a charmed life, and pardoned; and, moreover, taken into the service of the judge—the real charm that saved this man's life, being, in fact, a large bribe; the other six poor fellows, having no means of bribery, were executed. As for my own position, disagreeable and painful as it was—for the smallness of the holes in the stocks so squeezed my ankles that

the pain remained for days after—it was of short duration; for no sooner did Mr. Johnson return with the ticals of flowered silver than I was released, when, having with the woman's accuser partaken of a dish of pickled tea—the customary form of concluding any trial—I returned home with my friend.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR LIVES SAVED BY A CANNON-BALL.

As day by day the rumors of the rupture between the English and the Burman governments increased, the position of the Europeans in Rangoon became intolerable; for as the natives arrogantly believed the power of their king to be sufficient not only to drive us from his dominions, but to conquer and plunder the Presidency of Bengal, we were soon subjected to innumerable petty annoyances; but when the news arrived that their hitherto victorious general, Bandoola, was on his march to the capital of British India, with a vast army, the petty tyrants of Rangoon exerted their tyranny to the utmost, forbidding us either to trade, leave the town, or even congregate together at the exchange.

Now, as Mr. Johnson suspected that our position would speedily become altered for the worse, rather than better, he resolved to seize the first opportunity of leaving the city, and making his way to Ava, and so seek the protection of his friend, the Prince of Prome. So narrowly, however, were we watched, that the project seemed hopeless, until one day, while we were conversing upon our prospects, our Malay boy, with a grin upon his face, entered the room, saying, "A message-man from the Golden City; 'spose he bring good news for young sahib."

This messenger, who followed at the boy's heels, was a man of middle size, and though his skin was not so dark, he was dressed in the fashion of the native merchants; that is, his head, which was shaven all but a small tuft of hair, was covered with a cotton handkerchief; and he wore the loose jacket, sandals, and the linen leg-coverings which pass for trousers.

"Who are you, my friend? surely not a Burman," said Mr. Johnson, when the man had performed the shiko, or Burman obeisance.

"Naon Myat, the slave of the Prince of Prome," was the reply.

"Then I half suspect that Naon Myat is a great rogue," said my friend.

"Naon is not rogue, but good slave to great Prince of Prome, who has sent him with this letter," replied the man, holding a paper packet above his head.

"Bravo! good news at last," said my friend, when he had perused the document.

"May it indeed prove so," said I, although not by any means sanguine.

"Good it is, though, my boy, for it is nothing less than a command from the Prince of Prome for you to accompany this messenger to Ava, when his highness intends to restore your father's property."

"Then the messenger should be rewarded," said I, joyfully.

"Not a bad suggestion. He shall, my boy," and the next minute my friend led Naon into our spacious cooking-room, where he left him in charge of the cook, making his choice from the best in our larder.

"I doubt this fellow's honesty," said Mr. Johnson, on his return.

"For what reason?"

"He is a half-caste: part Portuguese, part Burman; and all half-castes are treacherous."

"Pooh, pooh, this is ungenerous; besides, the man is but a messenger; and therefore, if he has the inclination, he cannot have the power, to harm me."

"You do not know these fellows, Harry;—I do. My mind is made up; I will accompany you."

"Capital," said I; "but do you doubt the genuineness of that letter?"

"No; for it bears the royal seal, which will, by-the-bye, enable us to leave Rangoon; for that even the Governor himself dares not dispute."

"When shall we start?" said I, impatiently.

"At sunrise to-morrow."

"So be it;" and I felt more joyful than since I had been in Rangoon. Thus man proposes.—Before, however, that sun arose we were awakened by the screaming of women, the angry shoutings of men, the tramp of native soldiers, the rolling of heavy pieces of artillery, the beating of tomtoms, the grunting of swine, and the howling and barking of dogs. Thus aroused, we jumped from our beds and ran down the ladder into the street, and then, far as the eye could reach we saw blaze after blaze of fire.

"The fire beacons are lighted throughout the country; an enemy must be near."

"The English fleet," I exclaimed, joyfully.

"The vile rogue confesses his guilt," said a voice;

and the next moment a heavy blow upon the back of my head felled me to the ground.

How long I remained senseless I know not, but my next sensation was that of a racking pain in my head, to relieve which I endeavored to raise my hand, but, to my horror, I found it bound to my side by a thick rope; then, looking around, my real situation stood visibly before me; there, in a long low room were about thirty Europeans lying or sitting upon the hard flooring, with their ankles fastened between two poles of bamboo, which ran nearly the whole length of the room, and were held at least twelve inches from the ground by ropes suspended around pulleys near the ceiling, the ends of the ropes being conveniently at hand, so that the legs of the prisoners could be raised or lowered according to the pleasure of the attendant pa-kwets; some half a dozen of whom stood gazing with malignant satisfaction at the miseries of their victims.

As I have intimated, I at once comprehended that we were prisoners in the hands of the authorities, but why or wherefore was an enigma. Then I remembered the alarm in the streets, and the lighting of the beacons. Truly, I thought, the town has been treacherously taken by the old enemies of the Burmans (the Siamese), and the Europeans are their prisoners; but my head throbbed so violently, and my position—from my legs being lifted so far from the ground, and my arms being bound so tightly—was so torturing that I can compare the sensation of that moment to nothing but a terrible nightmare. I

could not move, I could not speak, and groaning with agony, I should have fainted, but that a voice near me, said—

"My poor boy.—A tical for a jug of water in his face, you scoundrels."

It was the voice of Mr. Johnson. I endeavored to move, to speak. The next minute my face was deluged with water, which revived me, and I said—

"You, too, a prisoner, my friend? Where are we? why are we confined? what is our crime?"

"In the custom house, suspected of treason, and likely to be put to death, my poor boy."

"But for what? why?"

"The rumor of the quarrel between the King and the Governor-General of India is true, and the English fleet is in the Irrawaddy, it is suspected with an army which is to attempt the conquest of Burma."

"Then we are prisoners of war."

"Not so: we are in prison as traitors, for it is believed we Europeans have secretly invited the English, and so caused this sudden and unexpected appearance of the fleet."

"That fellow, Naon Myat, has he not some connection with our present position?" I said, suspecting the half-caste.

"No; for, like ourselves, he is confined in these stocks," replied my friend; and I felt some satisfaction in the conviction that Naon was guiltless.

"If the colar (stranger) dogs would not have their miserable tongues torn out, let them keep silence,"

said a jailor, striking us upon the head with a bamboo staff.

"It is your turn now, it may be ours soon," muttered Mr. Johnson; and thus miserably we passed the night. That I slept was a miracle; I did so, however, for the next morning I was awakened by a raging thirst like that which accompanies a fever.

"Water, water, for the love of heaven!" I exclaimed; a request which would have been refused, but that my friend fortunately had money in his pocket, to get at which the pa-kwets kindly set one of his hands at liberty. Unfortunately, however, among the silver were several pieces of gold, which attracted the eager gaze of the officials.

About an hour afterward an officer entered the room and commanded the pa-kwets to march the Europeans to the Hall of Justice before the Myo-wun or Governor, when at once the stocks were opened and we were free, at least as far as our legs were concerned.

"Now comes our release, for they will not dare to refuse the order of the Prince of Prome," said I.

"Now comes our torture; see, that scoundrel is speaking to the Myo-wun's messenger," said Mr. Johnson; and almost at the same moment we were again forced into the stocks, the ropes pulled, the bamboo poles went upward, and we were suspended by the feet, head downward.

"The colar dogs must pay their fees," said the head jailor.

"Take them—take all, thou scoundrel," groaned

my friend; when, without waiting for a second invi tation, they emptied his pockets of the coin. Said I not that it was unfortunate the wretches saw the money?

Enraged, however, as we were, we were compelled to submit, for it is the custom of the country in every case.

Having secured their fees, and released us from the stocks, they stripped us of all clothing but shirts and trowsers, linked us together by the arms into droves of about twelve, each drove being secured by one rope, the end of which was held by two pa-kwets; and thus we were driven along barefooted, bare-headed, and faint for want of food, beneath a burning sun, and that, too, slowly, that our torture might be prolonged, till we reached the Hall of Justice; where, being first forced upon our knees, we were commanded by the Governor to confess our treason upon pain of being trodden to death by elephants.

It was in vain we pleaded our ignorance of the arrival of the English fleet; which, by the way, we most heartily wished was just then aware of our situation; for, whether he believed us or not, the Governor's hatred of Europeans was so great that he was resolved to wreak his vengeance upon those in his power.

"Miserable dogs! you have been too long permitted to soil the dust of the Golden Kingdom with your wretched feet. Long have you known the coming of your rebel countrymen in their warships; and still longer have you been treacherously preparing to

receive them; therefore it is well that you should be punished, to prevent further mischief," said he; adding, to the officer in charge, "See that their heads are taken from their wretched carcasses; and so shall any colar dog suffer who has the boldness to set his foot upon the soil of the Golden King."

Sentence having been thus passed, we were about being driven back to our prison, when Naon Myat, who, for some reason or other, had been gagged, having removed the impediment from his mouth, said, in the Burmese tongue,—

"It is not possible that the great Governor can punish the innocent; he dare not, even if guilty, condemn to death the slave of the mighty prince, the royal brother of the Golden Foot."

"Who then art thou, slave?" replied the Governor, as I thought, with something like a tremor.

"Naon Myat, the agent at the petroleum wells of the late Sahib Oliver, the friend of the mighty prince, whose slave thy servant now is."

"Then how came it, O Naon Myat, that thou wast found in company, in the very house, of one of these treacherous colars?" asked the Governor sternly.

"By the orders of my mighty and magnificent master, who commanded me to conduct the Sahib Johnson and the young Sahib Oliver to his golden palace, that he might confer honors upon the noble youth, in recollection of his friendship for his parent."

"Let the Sahibs stand forth," said the Governor, in a more friendly tone.

We did so.

"Dost thou so eagerly seek death that thou couldst not open thy lips?" said the Governor.

"We are as guilty and as deserving of death as our countrymen," replied Mr. Johnson.

"What says the boy?" said the Governor addressing me.

"As my friend said."

"Ah, then you both confess to this treachery of holding communication with and inviting the Bengal colars to invade the sacred soil of the Golden Foot?" exclaimed the Governor.

"We confess nothing, yet declare that we are as guilty, and as innocent, as our countrymen, and therefore seek not to be released alone," said Mr. Johnson.

"Do the vile colars dare me?" said the Governor

"We dare every thing for our innocent countrymen; and further, O Governor, I warn you that, if but one Englishman is killed, his fellow-countrymen, who are now without your town, will not leave one stone standing upon another, in this miserable place," said my friend, as I thought at the time, rather imprudently, for the threat was made to a man who from his infancy had been taught no less to tread upon the necks of all within his power, than to crawl abjectly upon his knees and hands before his superiors; and I was right, for, not deigning to reply, the Myo-wun ordered the officer to see that we shared the sentence of the other prisoners.

We were then taken to the public prison, heavily ironed, and placed in separate cells to await our execution; which, for some reason, probably to heighten

our torture, was put off from day to day. Each morning, however, we were driven in the same manner before the Governor, for the purpose of undergoing precisely the same questions and answers—a monotony varied only each evening by our being placed in the stocks heads downward; and thus suspended by our feet until the jailor had extorted some money—an operation, however, we were kindly informed was not intended as a punishment, but as the only means which the officials had of securing their rightful fees.

The real cause, however, of the postponement of our execution I believe to have been Mr. Johnson's threat, which made the Governor await while he communicated with his superiors; yet, although thus forced to delay destroying us, the worthy Myo-wun was determined to amuse himself with our sufferings; and this he did after the following manner.

Upon the fourth day we were driven down to the large room of the Godown, where we had the grim satisfaction of seeing the preparations for our decapitation. The floor was strewn with sawdust; six pa-kwets, well trained professional headsmen, stood at hand, twisting and twirling their fresh-sharpened glittering swords before our eyes. The Governor sat in a chair of state, while his principal officers, upon his hands and knees, with their eyes fixed upon us, to watch the motions of our features, crawled around him; and in this terrible suspense we awaited our doom for an hour, when we were reprieved for that day, and sent back to prison again to be put in the stocks and squeezed out of more fees.

On the fifth day, having been told that the Governor had received positive orders for our immediate execution, we were again driven to the Godown, and then our doom appeared certain, for, after sharpening and flourishing their swords, six prisoners—myself and friend among the number—were told off in a line; our heads were bent forward, while six pa-kwets stood over us with their sword-blades resting upon our necks.

Shall I ever forget the shudder that ran through my frame as that cold steel touched my skin? an instant, a word, a blow, and I should have passed from this world. Still I was an Englishman; the thought nerved me so that I do not think a muscle of my face was disturbed. No, commending my soul to God, I stolidly awaited my fate. There was a rustling of garments, the Myo-wun arose; I even remember that he cleared his throat to give the order. He spoke—but what he said I know not, for the same instant there came a report like the explosion of a mine, a crash, a fearful scream—and at the last instant of the twelfth hour we were saved; the Myo-wun had fallen dead, literally crushed to atoms by a thirty-two pound cannon-ball.

CHAPTER V.

I WITNESS A TERRIBLE SCENE, AND AM MADE A PAGODA PRISONER.

The incident just related is no fiction. The shot by which the lives of so many Europeans were saved from death is recorded in our military history. The British frigate *Liffey* had anchored within gun-shot of the town, and with the hope of a bloodless surrender had for some time refrained from opening fire upon the Burmese. When, however, the Myo-wun had, by beating and sheer force, compelled the miserable natives (for not anticipating an attack from the sea-side, there were but few regular troops present) to man the batteries and fire at the ships, the British commander acknowledged the compliment by the thirty-two pound shot, which, miraculously, without injuring one other person, killed the Governor.

The scene which followed upon the death of the Governor, and the attack upon the town, was worthy the pencil of a Vernet. A series of yells shook the Godown, and almost drowned the voice of the second in command, who ordered his prisoners to be driven to the Shoe-Dagon temple. The order was immediately obeyed, but it was with no small difficulty we could make our way through the crowded town, for the late Governor—hopeless of maintaining the place

for any length of time against the British, without reinforcements—had hastily organized household servants, porters, pagoda slaves, priests, and boatmen into corps for fighting, while their families, old men, women and children, were driven like cattle in droves into the recesses of the neighboing jungle, there to remain, not for their own safety, but as hostages who would have to answer with their lives for the good conduct of the newly levied soldiers.

The scene was appalling; with savage brutality the drovers, armed with bamboos, spears and hatchets, kicked with their feet or struck with their spears hobbling cripples or weak women, who screamed fearfully as the shot and shell fell within the stockade, amid the yells of the defenders, the bellowing of cannon, the howling and barking of packs of dogs, and the grunting of the half-wild swine which were being driven with the crowd. Then the demoniacal laugh of the pa-kwets, and the cry of agony of the wounded or dying persons, as a shot now and then fell among us, killing some, wounding others, calls up to my memory even now a scene that freezes my blood. Among the wounded was Mr. Johnson, who, being unable to walk, was carried upon the shoulders of a pa-kwet.

There was a supplement, however, to this terrible sight, which, belonging to ordinary civilized life, and not to the chances of war, filled me with greater horror than all I had witnessed. On our way to the great Dagon road we passed a bend of the Irrawaddy; the tide was rising rapidly, to the intense terror

of seven naked men, who, having been secured by ropes to stakes, which were driven into the bed of the river at low water, were then awaiting death by drowning; and with strained eyeballs and demented countenances, calculating, perhaps, the length of their existence by the gradually rising waters. These men had received this sentence for sacrilege, or robbing a monastery, and being too poor to bribe the judge, it was being carried out with shocking exactness. Oh! that I were free; what would I not risk to release those suffering creatures! were the thoughts that passed through my mind.

Thus, beneath a burning sun, which on our way struck several of my companions in misfortune senseless, and upon a broad, well-paved road, whose sides were studded with pagodas and kioums, or monasteries, and the heat of which was so intolerable that it scorched our feet, we were driven for a distance of three miles, till we arrived at a mound, some seventy feet in height, but so vast, that the area upon the top exceeds two acres, and from the centre of which, in the shape of an inverted speaking trumpet, arises in its golden glitter, to a height of three hundred and eighty feet, the Shoe-Dagon, or Golden Dagon Pagoda, which, being supposed to contain eight true hairs of Guadama—the god of the Burmans—is the chief shrine toward which pilgrims bend their course from all quarters of the empire. The Shoe-Dagon, is also the sole place of worship of the people of Rangoon; for although there are numerous smaller pagodas, like those we passed upon the road,

they are the private properties of wealthy individuals, by whom alone they are made use of for the purpose of worshiping Guadama, whose golden image, enshrined therein, is the object of their adoration; and who, by the way, according to the Burman priests, was so wonderful a personage that I will give you a slight sketch of his origin and doings.

Guadama was born 626 before our Saviour. He was the son of a king of Ma-ge-deh, in Hindoostan. When born, he was nursed by two deities, and his divine origin and perfections were made known by the bowing of the idol before which, according to custom, he was presented when born.

Previous to his last birth he had lived in four hundred millions of worlds, and like any other inhabitant of the world, had gradually worked his way up through the state of beasts, and had been in every condition of life. Immediately upon his birth this astonishing baby exclaimed, "Now I am the noblest of men. This is the last time I shall ever be born."

When he was ten years of age he was placed under the care of a wise man named Bahburemihbacshi, who instructed him in every kind of knowledge; however, he soon outstripped in knowledge sufficiently to teach the wise man, his master, sixty languages. At twenty he married, but either from the shrewishness of his wife, or some other cause, he expressed a desire to turn anchorite, assumed the name of Guadama, and gave himself up to the contemplation of the Deity.

This, of course, is the tradition carried down by

his disciples; the truth, however, as near as we can ascertain, is worth our knowledge, for Guadama, although a pagan, was evidently a personage of mark in his own unenlightened age, and moreover a great reformer. And this truth has been attempted to be discovered by a learned writer, who says,—

The truth concealed in this Indian fable seems to be simply this, that the son of the King of Ma-ge-deh, whose rank and austerities had secured the veneration of his countrymen, had sense enough to perceive the absurdity of the Brahmin's system, and ability enough to persuade his countrymen to adopt his own. The success of his new doctrine was such, that at one period it had nearly suppressed the ancient faith of the Hindus; but when events, which we cannot now trace, had re-established the authority of the Brahmins, they showed that they were not behindhand in retaliation; the followers of Budd'ha (*i. e.* Guadama) were persecuted without mercy; and scarcely an individual of that faith can now be found in Hindoostan. Some of the fugitives appear to have taken refuge in Ceylon, while others fled into the mountains of Thibet. From Ceylon they conveyed their doctrine to the eastern peninsula of India. From Thibet it traveled over Tartary to the north and west, into China in the east, and from thence into Cochin-China and the other regions in the south, where it is only divided by a lofty chain of mountains from its kindred faith, imported from the south and west into the kingdoms of Ava and Siam.

Guadama, say the Burmans, obtained Nibban

(*i. e.*, died) in the year before Christ 543, and at his death advised that his relics and image should be worshipped and his law obeyed, until the appearance of the next Boodh ar Buddha, who would make his advent in five or six thousand years.

But to continue my narrative:—

This temple, then, transformed into a fortress, guarded by two large field-pieces, and which was to be our prison, was the most magnificent structure I had seen in Burma. It was encircled by two terraces within a balustrade, which represented a huge crocodile, whose jaws were supported by two immense figures of a male and female Belhoo, or evil genius, who, with clubs in their hands, guard the entrance.

Up a great flight of narrow steps we were driven to the upper terrace; from the centre of which arises the pagoda, or spiral portion of the structure, from an eight-sided golden base, surrounded by a vast number of smaller pagodas; griffins, sphinxes, and images of the Burman deity shooting out as it were from this base. The domed form of the pagoda tapers upward to an immense height, the summit of which is surmounted by a teè, or umbrella of iron work, from which are suspended a number of small bells, which are set in motion by the slightest breeze, and produce a pleasant, if not musical sound.

Having reached the upper terrace, we were formally given into the custody of the commander of the pagoda garrison, a stout, gaudily-attired, consequential-looking personage, who sat in a shabby chair of state, with one leg thrown forward, and his toes bent

underward, as if to grip the floor; his head and chest backward, that the inflation of his person might impress us with the dignity of the rank which the tslao, or cord of nobility, which he wore, proclaimed him to hold in the army. Before this officer the slaves compelled us to bend our backs and knees, and so remain till his grandness had not only heard the crime with which we were charged, but until he had severely scrutinized us from head to feet; after which, he condescended to say—

"The colars (foreigners) are rebels and traitors; they have betrayed the sacred land of the Golden Foot to their friends; therefore, as it is good they should be treated like slaves and thieves, let them be put in the stocks in the great cell."

When, fearing rather for my wounded friend than myself, for I had resigned all hope of rescue, I stepped forward and said boldly—

"The chief is a brave man, and can put his prisoners to the torture; but even he dare not raise the anger of the mighty brother of the Golden Foot."

"Does the dog of a rebel beard us?" he said, clutching the handle of his sword, as if to do instant execution on me.

"If the chief is not afraid of an unarmed boy, let him order my arms to be unbound, and he shall see that the Prince of Prome is my friend," said I.

To my surprise he ordered my arms to be set at liberty, and I gave him the prince's letter. When he had perused its contents, his lips quivered, either with rage or fear—I think the latter—and he said—

"The rebel dog dares me; nay, more, he thinks to laugh at me, by making me believe in this writing," said, he angrily; adding, however, ironically, "What would the dog ask—his liberty?"

"To be placed in one cell alone with my wounded friend till the chief can communicate with the great prince," said I.

"The dog is presumptuous. He believes I fear these characters, therefore must his eyes be opened," he replied; adding to the officer of the soldiers, "his prayer is granted; see that the old and the young rebel be chained together in one cell." After which, without another word, this subaltern despot arose, and having with some difficulty made his way through the slaves, who, as he arose, crouched at his feet, descended to the lower terrace.

Well might these miserable beings crouch and crawl in the shadow of power, for the smallest and briefest authority in Burma carries with it the power of life and death over inferiors.

Then, while our fellow prisoners were driven together in one large cell in the wall of the pagoda, Mr. Johnson and myself were conducted to a hole about eight feet square, where, having been first chained together arm in arm, we were left with our other limbs at liberty, and a small quantity of boiled rice, and a jar of water.

"It is at least a comfort that the rogue has put us together," said my friend.

"To me it is wonderful."

"Not at all, Harry; he means to befriend us," said Mr. Johnson.

"Then why chain us like two thieves?" said I.

"In order to keep up his dignity before his slaves and soldiers, whom he would not wish to believe he is afraid of us."

"Then the prince's letter frightened him, and he will release us."

"Not me, for he dares not; while after perusing the letter, he fears to keep, or at least to torture you. Thus, you will find that some time during the night he will come to this cell, and by way of favor, and for a sum of silver offer to release you."

"If it be so, I shall refuse to quit this hole without you."

"Nonsense, my boy, listen." Then in a whisper, Mr. Johnson said, "Accept the offer upon any terms, and you may release us all."

"How?" And my heart leaped with delight at the notion.

"Have you courage to make an attempt to reach the British fleet?"

"Do you doubt me? But how is this thing to be accomplished?"

"Accept his offer, but insist that, as it will be dangerous for a European to make his appearance just now among the people, that he provide you with the native costume; then seek the nearest point of the Irrawaddy, and await some opportunity of seizing a boat, when—but the rest I leave to your own prudence; then, when you reach the fleet, and have

made it known where the Europeans are confined, I am strangely ignorant of our countrymen if we are not soon set at liberty," said my friend.

"Glorious!" I cried. But then, as it occurred to me that he might be too sanguine, my ardor lessened, and I added, "Are you not too hopeful? this petty tyrant may not be so easily bought over."

"The princes, the king, the queen, all Burma may be bought at a price, but especially one, whose authority being temporary, is desirous of making his hay while the sun shines."

"I trust it may be so."

"Would that you could meet with that fellow, Naon Myat."

"Ah! I fear that fellow is a rascal, and that he betrayed us to the soldiers.

"A rogue he may be, most half-castes are; he dare not, however, be otherwise than faithful to you."

"Why not?"

"Because it is his interest to return to the Prince of Prome; and if he does so without being accompanied by you, his life will not be worth a day's purchase,"

"Capital!" I exclaimed.

"What! that the poor fellow should be put to death?"

"No, no, heaven forbid; but that it should be his interest to serve me, for without his knowledge of the wild country, I know not how I should get to Ava."

"In the train of the victorious British Army, I hope,"

"Well—yes; it is probable," I said.

At that moment, however, the commander of the garrison made his appearance, as my friend had foreseen.

"The rebel colars have been treated leniently," said the magnate, blandly.

"For which they beg the generous praw (lord) will deign to accept a present that he may build a pagoda," said Mr. Johnson.

"The Sahib Johnson is good," replied the rogue.

For my own part, my transactions with these people had been too few to have become hypocritical, so I said—

"The officer has read the Prince's commands, and therefore for his life dares not any longer obstruct my journey to Ava. Let him therefore generously, and like a warrior, at once release me and my friend, and he shall receive five hundred pieces of silver."

"The young colar is brave and generous, and I wish him well. He shall therefore depart."

"With my friend?"

"The shadow of the Golden Foot, the mighty Prince of Prome, has not so commanded—the colar Johnson is a prisoner. His countrymen are in rebellion at the gates of the city, therefore this cannot be; but as he is generous, and will make presents, he shall remain here unharmed until his friend the young colar may beg his release at the foot of the Golden Throne," was the stern reply.

Knowing that it would be useless to insist upon the release of Mr. Johnson, I said—

"Truly this is a great sorrow; but as it cannot be, I will accept my freedom; and the sahib, my friend, will see that the present of silver is paid. Yet, the brave warrior has forgotten that it will be dangerous for a colar at the present time to pass among the Burman people."

"The young colar's words are wise. He shall have a protection from the people under the seal of office," was the reply.

"Still it will not be safe for a European to be seen in the public ways without the pus'ho and engi of the Burman."

"The young colar's words are again good, and he shall be supplied with the dress." So saying, the chief left the cell

CHAPTER VI.

I AM CHASED BY A SERPENT, AND TAKEN BY THE ENEMY.

Two hours after the chief had quitted the cell, a slave made his appearance with a bundle beneath his arm. It was the promised native dress, namely, the pus'ho—a kind of trowsers, which, covering the loins, reach half way down the leg, and is made of a double piece of cloth so long, that it can be loosely wrapped about the body, and secured by having one portion tucked under another, one end being allowed to hang down loosely in front; the engi, or sleeved frock of white cotton tied with strings in front, and descending below the knee; a red Madras handkerchief, which being put on in the manner of a turban, but so as to leave the upper part of the head bare, formed the head-dress; and a pair of thick sandals for the feet.

When the man had assisted me, in completing my attire, and I had taken a hearty leave of my friend, he conducted me out of the cell. We had descended the steps of the pagoda, passed the outer sentries, and my heart felt lighter than it had for many a day. When, however, we turned an angle of the base of the building, what was my chagrin at seeing two ponies, one of which was saddled, and provided with a basket of provisions slung across his neck, and held

by a soldier in full uniform, *i. e.* with a red handkerchief around his head, a loose jacket of the same color, but naked legged, bare-footed, and tattooed. He was armed with a musket and a short sharp-pointed spear; and, I suppose, must have seen my vexation in my face, for he said—

"The young colar goes to the golden city of the Lord of Thousands of Elephants. The great Praw Myark (my friend the commander of the garrison) too much honor sahib to let he walkee, four legs go quicker than two, and slave see sahib no lost in jungle."

To which jargon, without exciting suspicion as to my real intentions, of course I could make no reply; so, making the best of a bad affair, I mounted the pony, which carried me at a gentle pace after my oily friend with the mahogany countenance and illustrated legs; but, as we went along, I racked my brains in endeavoring to account for this move of the commander of the pagoda garrison. Did he mean to betray me? No, it could only be for his own safety that he had taken this means of preventing my going to Rangoon; for should I happen to be retaken, he would have to pay for my escape from the pagoda with his own life.

But when at least an hour had passed, and I began to fear for the safe execution of my schemes, I resolved that my mahogany-colored friend must be got rid of. Yes, but how? and I smiled as I for the moment determined, by a bold effort, to cut the reins of my pony, throw them across the fellow's arms, and

thus secure him to a tree. Very good, as far as it went; but then we were crossing a great swamp through rice-fields, wherein no tree was to be found; and so ended my scheme, till at length we entered the pestiferous jungle which skirted a large teak forest, where I resolved to make the attempt; so, awaiting this opportunity, and calculating the chances of my success, unarmed as I was, over a completely armed savage, I rode on in silence, and so long and so far through this dense jungle, that I began to fear that even, in the event of my getting rid of my keeper, I should never be able to find my way to the river. "Ah! the Irrawaddy," I exclaimed, as, breaking through a mass of entangled underwood, I caught sight of water.

"It is long—far from the Mother of Waters; it is what sahib calls shoot out of," said the soldier.

"A branch of the Irrawaddy," I replied, translating the man's meaning; and even if it be, I thought, and leads to the great river itself, it is doubtlessly so covered with war-boats carrying recruits to the besieged city, that it would be dangerous to follow its course; and so I rode on in sullen discontent till we reached the stream, when seeing my guide intended to travel along the banks, and that, too, in an opposite direction to the Irrawaddy, I said,

"Let us ford this stream; it will save time."

"No ford this—it no can be, sahib; no good swim when can walkee," replied the man, greatly to my surprise, for a Burman takes to water as naturally as a duck.

"Then we will eatee and drinkee," I replied, ill-naturedly mocking him, and resolved to come to a halt, and with the assistance of the pure water make my morning meal of cold boiled rice and fish; when upon the instant my guide, who was probably as much in want of refreshment as myself, leaping from his horse, spread out a cloth upon the grass near the edge of the river; and while I made my meal, squatted down, holding his share in his hands and rolling his eyes by turns in every direction, as if upon the look-out for dangerous beasts or reptiles—a watchfulness that I soon found necessary, for jumping suddenly from his squatting position to his feet, and seizing me by the arm, he cried, "Let sahib take care—the snake! the snake!" and there at a distance of a single spring lay a huge snake, with its great eyes glistening in our faces.

"Fire, idiot!" I exclaimed, thinking he was too much terrified to use his musket.

"No, sahib, not fire; snake no take notice, if not fire; if fire and not kill, snake follow every where till catchee and killee."

Not, however, understanding the man's full meaning, vexed at being interrupted in my rough meal, and not by any means inclined to trust to the politeness, generosity, or self-denial of so formidable a creature, I snatched the gun from his hands, and discharged it at the reptile; but a blow from the now really terrified Burman turned the weapon aside, so that the snake was but slightly wounded, it hissed, lifted up its great head, and preparing to make a

spring, would the next moment have had me in its fangs, but for my making a backward leap. The distance gained, however, by this leap afforded but a temporary respite; for with an agility that astounded me, the reptile followed at my heels, at which, being unarmed, I became so alarmed, that at the top of my speed I fled along the banks; stopping, however, to take breath, I found the reptile still so near, that in another instant it would have overtaken me. There was but one chance of escape before me—the river; I plunged into the stream, swam to the other side, scrambled upon the bank, and then rested to thank Heaven for my narrow escape; but, to my horror, there, rising above the waters, was the head of the reptile, with its eyes dilated with rage, and its fangs protruding from its jaws. To my feet again, and off at full speed. In rising, my head-dress fell to the ground; not stopping, however, to pick it up, I ran so fast that I believe the exhaustion of nature alone would have stopped me, had I not heard the voice of the Burman. This made me look back, and then, while panting for breath, guess my surprise at seeing the reptile—which, although intelligent enough to follow me for the insult I had put upon it—stupidly wreaking its wrath upon my head-dress, and that, too, so determinedly, that it did not see the stealthy approach of the cat-like Burman, who, forgetting his reluctance to swimming, had crossed the stream, and, moreover, in a paroxysm of courage, put it to death with the butt-end of his musket.

Need I tell you it was the first and last time I ever

made an unprovoked attack upon a snake, at least of the family with which my enemy was connected, and which, by the way, is somewhat celebrated for similar kind of feats.

These reptiles, called hamadryas, are more commonly found in Tenasserim than in Pegu. They are between ten and twelve feet in length, with a short head, a dilated neck, thick trunk, short tail, and nearly black in color. The hamadryas's bite is fatal; and so fierce in its nature, that, although it may frequently not attack without provocation, when provoked, as I have shown you, it will not only savagely attack, but pursue its enemy until it has satisfied its vengeance.

Perceiving that even after we had recrossed the stream, and were preparing to remount our ponies, the Burman still trembled, I said,—

"Why, thou coward, the enemy is dead, and can do thee no harm."

"Me no fear for self, me fear for sahib; had sahib been killed, his slave killed too for no taking care of sahib."

As this way of proving that he did not care for his own safety was rather illogical, I felt no very great compunction at carrying out my scheme for a separation between us upon the first opportunity. That opportunity, I intended, should soon happen, for, as the adventure with the snake had once placed the musket in my hand, I managed by means of a trifling excuse, to again get it in my possession; indeed, to my surprise, the Burman did not offer the least objec-

tion; the reason being, perhaps, that he thought it would be impossible for me to find my way out of the dense forest into which we had now entered without his guidance.

As we advanced into the forest I must admit that I was much puzzled to account for his change of manner, for from the wary guard, who had watched my almost every step, glance, and movement, he had become careless as to my movements, and as obedient as if he had been my slave.

The enigma, however, received a more speedy and unpleasant solution than I anticipated; for, as we were riding slowly toward a thicket of bamboos, there arose a loud yell, the meaning of which flashing across my mind instantaneously, I felled him to the ground with my musket, exclaiming—

"Thou wretch, thou hast betrayed me;" but scarcely had the words left my lips when there was a rush from the thicket, a heavy weapon fell upon the back of my head, and I became senseless.

I do not think I could have remained in a state of unconsciousness long; for, when I recovered, I found my wrists bound tightly together, the sensation of blood trickling from my wound, and that I was being carried at a rapid pace through the wood. How far or how long this journey lasted I know not, to me the distance appeared to be considerable; but pain prolongs time, and I suffered great agony from my wound, so great indeed, that I must have again swooned, for without the least remembrance of a halt, I remember only finding myself lying among some

tall rank grass, near the huge bole of one of the many teak trees which nearly encircled a glade. In my agony I suppose I must have groaned, for a man coming to my assistance, unbound my wrists, raised me in a sitting position against the tree, and having tied my legs together with a cord, the end of which was secured to the tree, put a jar of water and some cold boiled rice by my side, and without a word left me to myself.

The severity of pain becoming lessened, a numbness ensued which, however, became relieved by a copious draught of water. The refreshing liquid seemed also to give me new life, my sense of hearing became quicker, my eyes brighter, and alas! the sense of my miserable situation far greater. I could not doubt that I was in the power of some savage tribe, on its way to or from the army, then being raised to oppose the British force.

The number of my captors amounted to fifty, for, whimsically enough at such a moment, I counted them as they squatted upon the ground in small parties, and ravenously partook of their fish, rice, and grapes, or pickled tea. A minute's observation showed me that they were not mere raw recruits, but soldiers who had pitched their bivouac for the night, which, by the way, as it was fast drawing upon us, proclaimed the length of time I must have remained senseless; observing that I was looking at them so intently, the officer of the party sent a soldier to stand over me as sentinel. Then the thought occurred to me that, if I pretended not to understand a

word of the Burman tongue, they would converse together freely, and thus I might glean some information as to their intentions. Accordingly I addressed a few words in English to my guard; and although he did not understand them, he made me comprehend their intentions toward me in the event of my attempting to run away, by pointing in the distance with one hand, while with the other he drew a long knife across his throat.

The pain in my head returning, I leaned backward against the tree; when the soldier, perhaps believing that I sought to sleep, and that a long rest might give me sufficient strength to relieve one of his comrades from the trouble of carrying me on the next march, left me to rejoin his companions. Then, for the first time, I bitterly regretted I had learned the Burmese language; for, from the earnest conversation which took place, I found they intended to carry me the next day before the Maha Silwa, the most savage of the Burman commanders, a man whose hatred to Europeans was so intense that he had offered a large sum for every one taken alive, that he might have the savage satisfaction of witnessing their death by torture. Then, as if to add to my mental agony, my memory brought vividly before me the horrible cruelties the Burmese chiefs had been known to practice upon their unfortunate captives; one instance, especially, that of a brave English colonel, who had been discovered by his brothers in arms, crucified, head downward, in one of their pagodas,

from which the General named by my captors had been driven by assault.

Terrible as was the prospect before me, I believe it sharpened my wits, for the shudder at the idea of death by slow torture becoming softened, I began to ponder what could be done—nothing, but place my trust in Providence and watch my opportunity. And here let me impress upon you that nothing but my great faith in the goodness of the Almighty could have kept me sane that night; that faith soothed my spirits, giving me a feeling of calm determination, a feeling I can compare to nothing but that which it certainly was not—apathy; for out of it arose the hope that saved me.

If by my knowledge of their tongue I was punished as listeners are said to be punished, namely by hearing no good of myself, I also heard news that made me joy for Englishmen. That day a battle had been fought with our troops, who had forced the Burmans far into the jungle, there to await the arrival of reinforcements.

Then I smiled as I heard these rude men describe the English soldiers as a kind of devils, who could not be killed, and who no sooner lost an arm or leg than their doctors replaced them immediately. Moreover, I learned they were expecting the arrival of some comrades, who were to bivouac with them. This arrival happened almost as they spoke, for suddenly I heard a great yelling, which was vociferously answered by my captors, who in a few minutes were joined by a party heavily laden with hampers, bun

dles, baskets, and to my surprise, a couple of rifles. The satisfaction of both parties at meeting appeared mutual, although words cannot express the delight of my captors when they saw before them salted beef, pork, barrels of biscuit, bottled beer, wine, and several large kegs of spirits.

To me, the sight of these things brought grief, for I knew that they must have formed part of the stores of some English regiment, and feared that my countrymen had met with a defeat, which I afterward discovered was not the case, but that the party had been fortunate enough to surprise a badly-escorted wagon party.

The new comers formed a portion of the most remarkable corps of the Burman army, an institution in itself. These "Invulnerables"—for such is the title they bear—are picked from the population, and distinguished from the other troops by their shorter hair, the more exquisite finish of the illustrations upon their legs, of elephants, tigers, and other animals, and the precious stones or pieces of gold beneath the skin of their arms, and which are inserted during childhood.

By their countrymen, and themselves, these poor creatures are believed to be invulnerable; a conceit which, although somewhat taken out of them by the British soldiers and sailors, they found it necessary to keep up during the war; indeed, it is recorded that throughout the whole contest the Invulnerables were found defending the stockades, their duty being to exhibit the war-dance of defiance upon the part of the

works most exposed to the murderous fire from the English guns, in order to infuse courage and enthusiasm into the breasts of the Burmese troops; and that, when at length their belief in their invulnerability became a little shaken by the English troops, the Burman commander endeavored to revive it by the free supply of opium.

However, the arrival of these military mountebanks with their plunder of British stores, revived my hope of escape, for, from their surfeit, I thought I might obtain my liberty, although how, or by what means, I could not comprehend. Still, pretending to sleep, I watched their movements narrowly.

A fire being kindled around a few large stones, hampers were opened, and the viands placed in the flames; and then, while so absorbingly engaged, some cooking, others standing by with their mouths watering at the prospective treat, I heard a groan, which sounded as if it came from one of the packages which the Invulnerables had thrown upon the ground a few yards from me.

Keeping my eyes fixed upon this package, in a few minutes I saw it move. It was a human being, bound hand and feet, with his head and legs so bent together that he resembled a ball.

The groan being heard by the officer of the Invulnerables, he whispered to one of his men, who immediately ran to the poor captive, untied his arms, and brought him to a tree near to me, and there left him; but so long had the poor fellow been tied in that unnatural position, that it was some time before he could

I FIND A FELLOW-PRISONER.

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even stretch out his hand or leg. Like myself, fastened by the waist to the trunk of a tree, his legs were at liberty; but as his back was turned toward me, I could not discern his face. Then he called piteously for water; the language Burman, and the voice was familiar to me. I watched anxiously to obtain a glance at his features. When the water was brought, he turned his face toward me, and I at once recognized the features of an acquaintance.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEREIN I AM NEARLY BITTEN TO DEATH, AND WITNESS THE PUNISHMENT OF A SERPENT BY A MONKEY.

"NAON MYAT!" I muttered, in surprise.

"Lord of heaven! who speaks?" he ejaculated in broken English.

"The young sahib Oliver," I replied; adding, "but speak low, and in English;" for, although the soldiers were just squatting down to their feast, I feared to arouse their attention.

"Heaven be praised, then, the sahib is alive."

"Hush! they are looking this way," I said, and then in silence we gazed anxiously and earnestly upon a scene which, but that it led to our liberty, I would not now relate.

While some placed huge pieces of meat upon the stones in the fire, awaiting only till it was half-warmed before they snatched it off and commenced eating; others, the greater part, divided the food with their knives, and fell to eating like a herd of half-starved wolves. Indeed, the treat before them was such an one they had never before enjoyed. To their appetites, therefore, temperance was out of the question. Men with the voraciousness of wild beasts—it was fearful; but still I prayed that their hunger might be followed by as deep a thirst. It was; kegs of

rum were broached, and they drank till they reeled against each other. Then a man shouted with joy, for he had discovered a prize in the shape of a large case of French liqueurs, the property of some luxurious English officer. The savage sipped, the flavor was new, and he danced with insane and sensual delight. Then the whole party of already-intoxicated brutes followed his example, and, having once tasted, could not restrain themselves; so, sipping, sipping, till they could sip no longer, they rolled one after the other in deep drunken sleep upon the ground.

It was a disgusting, a fearful sight. The cold pale light of the brightly-shining moon, mixing with the lurid flames of the fire, shed a ghastly hue over the faces of the senseless brutes that makes me shudder now even, while I recal the scene to my memory.

Still I felt my opportunity had arrived, and rejoiced; but, alas! I was tied to the tree; fortunately, however, the savage who had bound me had performed his task carelessly. A single jerk loosened the cord, so that I could crawl toward my fellow-captive, who, hopeless of escape, was gazing steadfastly at the revolting scene, and who, when in a soft voice I pronounced his name, exclaimed with fear,

"The Lord of heaven save me!"

"Hush! it is the sahib Oliver," I replied.

"True! the Lord be thanked, it is the young sahib," said he.

"There is hope, Naon."

"The Sahib is right. Yes, while there is life there is hope," he replied, despondingly.

"Let us escape, then, Naon."

"It is not impossible. Oh, sahib, I am tied to this tree."

"True; but your hands and feet are free, you can unfasten the cord around my legs," said I, lying upon my back, and placing my feet upon his breast.

A minute of painful anxiety, lest one of the soldiers might awake, and my legs were at liberty. A glow —a vigor ran through my whole frame; in another minute I had performed a similar service for Naon, and we were both free, mutely, thanking that Providence to which, and that vice drunkenness, which slays both mentally and physically more thousands than the sword, pestilence, or famine, we owed our liberty.

Stealthily creeping by the stupified slaves of the bottle, I seized a rifle and a flask of the liqueur—the first for our protection, the latter as a medicine that might restore our exhausted strength. The thoughts of my fellow-captive were bent on revenge; for, snatching up a naked sword, the next instant he would have plunged it into the body of the sleeping chief, had I not caught his descending arm, whispering at the same time, "Idiot, you will arouse them—follow softly."

Thus recalled to a sense of the folly he had been about to commit, he followed me—where, I knew not, thought not; but for some minutes we ran through the tall rank grass. We reached the thick wood again. I could go no further, I clung to a tree for support; Naon fell prostrate. Pain and exhaustion

were our masters; not even the horror of being retaken, if we remained in that spot, could lend us strength sufficient to advance further. Fortunately, I thought of the flask of liquor. I broke the neck against a tree, drank, and was revived. I poured some of the liquid down my companion's throat; it had the same effect upon him. Thus, with renewed, if but borrowed, strength, we hastened through the forest, which for a mile or two was but scantily wooded; and then, as we proceeded, dwindled in size, until brushwood seemed to have taken the place of trees. Still onward as fast as our weakness would permit. The ground became more moist. This, however, in our fear of being overtaken, we heeded not; no, not even when the moistness had become a swamp. Suddenly Naon called out; doubtlessly we were being pursued; death rather than be again in the hands of the savages, and like a startled hare I sprang forward, and found myself head foremost in a bog. I had yet strength to recover my feet, but my presence of mind forsook me when I felt that I was in a quagmire, sinking inch by inch. I had sunk to my waist, when Naon, by an effort more of will than physique, succeeded in rescuing me from a death too terrible to think of even now without a shudder; and which would have been inevitable, had I fallen farther from the brink of the treacherous morass.

"You have saved my life, Naon," I exclaimed.

"It was the will of Heaven; but," he added, "we are safe—we are safe, sahib; this morass is not far from the Carianers' village."

"Far or near, I can go no further without rest," I exclaimed.

"It is but wisdom, sahib, for nature will hold out no longer," said Naon, philosophically; and there, upon damp grass, near the edge of the morass, tired, exhausted, we laid down—and, in spite of our danger, slept. My sleep, however, became troubled, for I dreamed we had again fallen into the hands of the Burman soldiery, who were putting me to death by rolling me down a hill in a barrel lined with dagger points, the pricking of which awoke me, when the cause of my dream became more evident than agreeable. My arms and legs were spotted with the small, hungry, and loathsome leeches which infest the marshes of Pegu.

"Naon, Naon! the beasts are sucking me to death," I exclaimed, endeavoring to tear one off my skin.

"The sahib must not touch them, or they will bleed him to death," exclaimed Naon, looking aghast, and fearing to pull them off; knowing, as he did, that, if thus removed, dangerous ulcers would ensue.

"But this is unbearable. What is to be done, Naon?" I said, almost crying with pain.

"Tombakoo—tombakoo," replied he, pointing to a field within a short distance.

I comprehended his meaning. It was a tobacco-field, where, fortunately for me, the plant was not only plentiful, but blackening to ripeness. Gathering some, and having well moistened it, Naon poured the juice upon the vampires, who, to my great delight—

for the attachment was entirely on one side—dropped off one by one, leaving me, however, in a very unenviable state, for the bleeding did not entirely cease for some hours afterward.

The most curious, and to you, I have no doubt, interesting part of this adventure will be, to be told that these dangerous reptiles have little in common either with the horse-leeches or those used by medical men in this country. They are of a dark speckled color, and not larger than a blood-worm; neither do they crawl like the leeches I have named, but move forward by a series of jerkings, by first fixing their head on a spot, and bringing their tail up to it by a sudden jerk, while at the same time their head is thrown forward for another grip; thus, their movements are so quick, that before they are perceived they contrive to get up one's clothes and fix upon the skin; and that too, easily, through the light thin clothes worn in an Indian climate.

Perhaps, however, the best notion I can give you of the danger pedestrians, and even equestrians, have to fear from these insects, will be in the words of a recent traveler through a neighboring country where they abound. He writes: "In marching through the narrow paths among the woods, we were terribly annoyed by these vermin; for, whenever any of us sat down, or even halted for a moment, we were sure to be immediately attacked by multitudes of leeches; and before we could get rid of them our gloves and boots were filled with blood. This was attended with no small danger; for if a soldier were, from

drunkenness or fatigue, to fall asleep no the ground, he must have perished by bleeding to death. On rising in the morning I have often found my bed-clothes and skin covered with blood in an alarming manner."

This was sufficiently annoying; but the same traveler then adds: "The Dutch, in their marches into the interior, at different times lost several of their men; and on setting out, they told us we should hardly be able to make our way for them. But though we were terribly annoyed, we all escaped without any serious accident. Other animals, as well as man, are subject to the attack of these leeches. Horses, from their excessive plunging and kicking to get rid of these creatures when they fasten upon them, render it very unsafe for any one to ride through the woods of the interior."

For two reasons did I rejoice at the discovery of this tobacco-field. First, that it had in all probability saved my life; and, secondly, because it was a sure sign of the proximity of some village where I might rest until sufficiently restored to strength to hasten on my mission for the relief of my friend Mr. Johnson and my fellow-countrymen. Thus, I said—

"The village of Carians, of which you spoke, must be near; shall we be safe in their hands, Naon?"

"Let the sahib stretch his eyes across those rice swamps," said Naon.

"I did, and in the distance saw enough to convince me that our hopes of resting within human habitation were futile, at least for the present, for there were

but the traces of a village—the mere charred remains of huts, from which a dark smoke ascended.

"The village has been destroyed—the English army must be at hand," I exclaimed.

"It is not so, sahib; the village has been burned by a Burman general on his march to Rangoon, and the people with their cattle driven further into the interior; so that, should the British venture so far from the sea, they may find neither food nor shelter," said Naon.

"Truly, then, all that we can do is, to reach the nearest point of the Irrawaddy as best we may," said I, resolved to make the attempt, notwithstanding that I could only walk by the aid of the rifle.

"It would be wiser to jump into the mouth of the first tiger or crocodile we may find, sahib; for, from Ava to Rangoon, the Irrawaddy is crowded with war-boats filled with troops on their way to join the army of the Maha Bandoola."

"War-boats or no war-boats, I will endeavor Naon."

to force my way to the English fleet or army,

"It would be wiser to enter the lair of a she tiger; for since Rangoon was entered by the English, the whole surrounding country has been occupied by the soldiers of the Bandoola."

"Rangoon taken? the English prisoners are then rescued," said I, at once thinking of my friend.

"It is not so, sahib; for, before the British could force the stockade which surrounded the city, the native inhabitants were all driven into the jungle."

"But the European prisoners, the sah b Johnson!" I exclaimed, in an agony of impatience.

"Were heavily ironed, and sent in a war-boat to Ava."

"But the sahib Johnson; do you know aught of him? Surely they would not torture the friend of the Prince of Prome with irons."

"Listen, sahib: thy servant is the slave of the king's brother, and so, although more Portuguese than Burman, and moreover a Christian, the governor released him from the stocks. Yet when he became so unwise as to attempt to aid the sahib Johnson to escape from the Shoe Dagon, and was discovered, the governor ordered him to be ironed and sent to Ava with the Europeans," said Naon.

"Then how did you escape?" said I.

"By giving the chief of the boatmen, who were to take us to Ava, a piece of gold; in return for which, during the night, he closed his eyes and ears while I swam ashore; reaching which, I at once resolved to make my way through wood and jungle to the petroleum wells at Yenangyoung."

"What, on foot, without food, or a gun wherewith to procure it? Truly it was a brave resolve," said I.

"I trusted to the hospitality of the inhabitants of the first village of Carians at which I should arrive, but alas! my path was crossed by the savages from whom the sahib last night rescued me."

"Bah! Naon, do not mention that again, for the aid was mutual; but let us resolve what to do."

"Let us proceed at once to Yenangyoung," said he.

"Impossible, for we have neither food nor ammunition, without which it would be as dangerous to encounter the beasts of the forests as to attempt to reach Rangoon through the native army, whose war-boats now cover the river and separate us from that city," said I.

"The sahib will have powder and bullets enough for the journey," said he, smiling, and pulling from his jacket a pouch of ball-cartridges which it appeared he had snatched from the ground where it had been thrown by the soldiers.

"The possession of this alters the case; so now lead on, Naon, and I will follow—that is, as far as my legs will carry me," I said; and Naon led the way, once more, into the jungle; but in a different direction from that in which we had escaped.

"Stay, Naon," I said, as the jungle, tall grass, and forest in the distance reminded me of tigers, snakes, and other any thing-but-hospitable inhabitants of those wild regions; "let us load the rifle."

"Hush! not wise, sahib. To fire it in any extremity now would be to bring upon us some straggling party, in whose hands we should be but little better than in the mouths of tigers, which beasts we have a good chance of avoiding till nightfall, when it will be time enough to load."

Although it was not without hesitation that I followed this advice, I soon had proof of its wisdom; for scarcely had we left the jungle and entered the

forest than we heard the sound of distant voices and the beating of tomtoms.

"The lord of heaven help us, for we cannot escape," said Naon.

"Load the rifle," I said, snatching the pouch from his arm, around which it was slung.

"It is destruction, sahib," said he.

"Then let us hide here," said I, pointing to some tall grass between two large banyan trees; but as I spoke the chattering of strange, unearthly voices met my ears, and two small branches fell upon my head. Looking upward, however, and not seeing any thing to alarm me, I was about to crawl among the grass, when Naon exclaimed,—

"No; no, sahib; the snakes, the tigers; much better climb tree."

"Good it was stupid not to have thought of that," I replied, and the next minute we were both seated upon a large branch of the banyan, hidden among its luxuriant foliage. Immediately, however, the chattering increased tenfold, and branch after branch continued to fall in succession within a few inches of our heads. "We are observed; one of the savages is pelting us with branches of the tree!" I cried out to Naon, in alarm.

"It is only a hoonuman. Look, sahib," said Naon pointing to some branches about six feet above us; and, notwithstanding our perilous position, I could not refrain from laughing; for there, in the most grotesque attitudes, chattering, grinning, with their long tails pendant, sat at least half a dozen monkeys,

the largest of which were assiduously pelting us with small branches, or rather twigs, and with justice, for had we not invaded their domain? Not so amused, however, did Naon seem; he was too well acquainted with the habits of the inhabitants of the woods of Pegu; for even when the sounds of the footsteps and tomtoms of the Burman soldiers had become lost upon our ears, he still seemed disinclined to move.

"Let us descend, Naon," said I.

"Not wise to be too fast, sahib; we are safe here."

"But," I replied, "the Burmans have passed; and, moreover, I am tired of being pelted by these brutes."

"A tiger or a snake must be near, or the monkeys would not be clinging together upon that branch. Let us watch, sahib."

Need I tell you that Naon's words changed my wish to descend; they did more, they caused me to strain my eyes; yet without discovering any cause for alarm, till Naon said,—

"Look, sahib, at the big monkey; her eyes are upon something."

Naon was right; the animal kept her eyes fixed upon the ground, all the time chattering and trembling with evident fear.

"Look, sahib! Lord of heaven, it is a hamadrya!" exclaimed Naon.

And there, among the lowermost branches, I saw entwined one of the largest of those dangerous snakes from which I had but a short time previously had such a narrow escape; not by any means an agreeca-

ble recognition when I remembered the danger of firing at the reptile; as for poor Naon, he trembled till his limbs shook the branches, exclaiming softly,—

"Lord of heaven! Lord of heaven! sahib, we are as good as dead."

"Stay, Naon! the reptile seems asleep; I will descend softly and crush its head with the butt-end of the rifle."

"Stay, sahib; stay, the hoonuman will save us the trouble."

And directly afterward, the monkey seeming more than half convinced that its natural enemy was asleep, glided gently from branch to branch downward, till within a few feet of the reptile; then stealthily creeping near, as if to become perfectly sure its slumber was not simulated, and apparently being satisfied, it crept, if possible, still more noiselessly toward the snake, and at a dash grasped its neck. The eyes of the startled serpent dilated, it thrust forth its fangs and made contortions with its huge body. It was, however, now harmless for mischief, and that its enemy knew, for it chattered and grinned with delight, even looking up at its family as if to invite them to rejoice in its triumph over their most dreaded foe; and the family recognising the signal, seemed about to descend to the aid of their parent. The latter, however, knew that, although scotched, the snake was not killed, and fearing for the safety of her family, looked up at them, and chattered, as much as to say, "Wait a little; wait a little;"

TORTURING A SNAKE.

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Then, with a refinement belonging to such wild beasts of humanity as we read of in history, and sometimes in newspapers, who are so de-humanized as to find a gratification in the sufferings of their fellow-beings, the hoonuman—no doubt thinking of the past danger of her family—unloosened its grasp, till the snake seemed relieved; then, closing it tighter than ever, with miraculous strength, she tore the snake from the branch around which it had been entwined, and running to the stump of a tree, began to bruise and grind its head, chattering all the while at its writhings and struggles under the torture; till, sickened at its sufferings, I could almost have slain the monkey who was performing for me, no less than itself and family, so inestimable a service. But I need not tell you that so silly a notion did not remain long in my head.

In a few minutes, more, however, the serpent, though not killed, was deprived of its poisonous fangs, and helpless, when the young monkeys descended the tree, and with their parent exhibited their joy, by chattering and throwing the snake from one to the other, until, seeing us descend, they scampered up a tree, and leaping from branch to branch, soon became lost to our sight.

Having thus received so much benefit from one of these animals, I should be ungrateful did I not tell you something of their peculiarities, for which, indeed, I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Wood, who tells us that the hoonuman or entullus monkeys, "being fully aware that they are held sacred by the Hindoos, and

will not be punished for any delinquency, take up their position in a village with as much complacency as if they had built it themselves. They parade the streets; they mix on equal terms with the inhabitants; they clamber over the houses; they frequent the shops, especially those of the pastrycooks and fruit-sellers, keeping their proprietors constantly on the watch, the only active resistance the shopkeepers have resource to being by covering the roofs of their shops with thorn-bushes."

This monkey, in fact, was deified by the ancient inhabitants of India, chiefly, it is supposed, from its resemblance in form to humanity. Their bodies were supposed, by the believers in the Buddhist superstition of the transmigration of souls, to be the shrines of human souls that had nearly reached perfection, and thereby made their habitations royal. Therefore, to insult the hoonuman is a crime of high class; while, to kill one, is equivalent to high treason, and punished with death; indeed, such a sacrilege as the murder of a monkey is, or was, sufficient to raise a population against the offender; and men who will not scruple to assassinate, or torture, or even leave an infirm companion to die from hunger, thirst, or wild beasts, will consider their feelings outraged if an accident happens to one of these creatures. Therefore, supposing Mr. Monkey to be fully aware of all this feeling in his favor, it is no wonder that he is a spoiled child, and, like all spoiled children, guilty of very eccentric and sometimes very wicked tricks. For its name this animal is indebted to the deity Hoonuman, who is

worshipped by the Hindoos under the form of an ape, and is one of the most frequent objects of their adoration, almost every pagoda having this figure delineated in some part of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SAD STORY--ANTELOPE SLAYING—A HERMIT'S CAVE.

"We have had a narrow escape," said I, as we again entered the path from which we had diverged in order to avoid meeting the Burmese troops.

"The Lord of heaven be praised that we have escaped the fangs of that reptile," replied Naon, but with such a terrified visage that I said,—

"What, Naon, a native of this wild country, and yet tremble at the sight of its animals?"

"Truly, a braver man than Naon Myat might fear the fangs of the snakes of Pegu," said he; adding, mournfully, "to a snake, sahib, thy servant owes his misfortunes; it slew his father, and made a slave of a beloved mother."

"Is thy history too painful to repeat?" I asked, with excited curiosity.

"First, let us be on our guard," said he; then, as I, with my finger upon the now loaded rifle, he with the naked sword in hand, and both upon the alert for the sudden spring of a tiger, journeyed through the forest, he told me his history.

"I am the only child," said he, "of a Portuguese merchant, who, having married a Burmese lady, took up his residence in the suburbs of Ava, in a house built of the exact size and according to the rules laid

down by the law for persons of his rank in life; for to erect a house of larger dimensions and better decorations than that prescribed to each rank is to incur the penalty of death Well, a few months after I had reached my tenth year, as my father was walking in his grounds, he saw the hooded head of a cobra di capello, which was lurking among some tufts of grass. Startled, as he was, at the sight of this venomous reptile, he called for assistance. By the time, however, his slaves made their appearance, the snake had glided away in the direction of an outhouse, in which it disappeared; and although the greater part of the day and the whole of the night was spent in the search, it was nowhere to be found.

"Now, as these snakes are so insidious in their movements, that when once in the neighborhood of a house, no person can tell when or where he may be pounced upon by the reptile, my father became greatly alarmed for the safety of my mother and myself, who were constantly in or near the house; so much so, that he offered a large reward for its discovery. The report of this reward soon brought to the house a "samp waller," that is, a person whose business it is to catch serpents. Well, when the snake-catcher was conducted to the outhouse where the reptile had hidden, he desired that he might be left to himself, in order to offer up a prayer for his success to 'Siva,' the goddess of destruction. Having been left alone for ten minutes, he sounded his tom-tom to signify that he was prepared to commence operations, when the whole family repaired to the outbuilding; and to

their delight, as the crested head of a cobra thrust itself forth from a fissure in the wall, they beheld it grasped by the samp waller, who deposited it in his basket, received the reward, and went on his way; and for a time we felt happy at being freed from the fangs of the hidden enemy we had so much dreaded."

"Surely that snake-catcher should have been well rewarded," said I.

"He should, but with the cost of his miserable life, were I to meet him, sahib," replied Naon, savagely; adding, "listen to the end. Some days after, my father was resting near that outhouse asleep, a strange hissing sound awakened him. Suddenly his foot rested upon the body of a snake. It was the spectacled snake, the cobra, which, on the instant, fixed its fangs in his leg. Believing in the certainty of death, but determined not to die unavenged, my father seized the reptile by the neck, dashed its head against a tree till its venom became harmless, ran into the pavilion, where my mother and myself were sitting, and, throwing down the body, exclaimed, 'Wife! boy! I am dying. There is one of my murderers, the other is the rogue "samp waller," who deceived us all.'"

"Surely he recovered; there was some remedy," said I, so excited by the story that I clutched his arm.

"Not so, sahib; he died a miserable death. The worst, however remains to be told. My father's affairs were declared to be so disordered that there was not money sufficient to pay his debts. My

mother—his wife—therefore, according to Burman law, was sold by the creditors as a slave, since which I have not seen her. For myself," he added," after a minute's silent grief at the memory, "I was taken charge of by an American merchant, who brought me up in his house, and to whom I am indebted for speaking your language."

"Then Naon remained silent for some time, and I asked him no more questions about the snake-catcher, who, perhaps you may know, was one of a class or caste of Hindoos who travel Hindostan, carrying, as a specimen of their power over these venomous reptiles, a small basket furnished with samples of deadly serpents, which they would have it believed they have tamed, and to whose venom they endeavor to prove their bodies mysteriously impervious by the following performance:—

There are generally two persons—a samp waller and his man. The man holds in his left hand a small pipe or flute, from which he produces a discordant sound, that is supposed not only to be the cause of his becoming greatly and fantastically excited, but to make the different serpents lift their crests, and encircle his body, when the "samp waller" or snake-catcher offers to the reptile his naked arm, which they seize with impetuous eagerness and bite till the blood runs from the wounds in a copious stream, notwithstanding which they are compelled to appear to suffer no inconvenience, inasmuch as they declare themselves *fated* to resist that venom which would be fatal to any individual not of their own caste.

As you may imagine, but few persons believe in this invulnerability. Many, however, have asserted that these men have a mode of abstracting the poison from the fangs before exhibiting them to the public. Yet this is improbable, for instances are not uncommon of men having died under the most violent convulsions within an hour after receiving these bites. With regard to the art of charming serpents from their hiding-places by means of music, it has been believed from all time. The man, however, who had professed to catch the cobra in the house of Naon's father was an impostor, who practised upon the credulity of the household, for the cobra which made its appearance in the presence of the family had been previously introduced into the fissure during the time he was supposed to be praying to Siva.

Thus, tramp tramp, with listening ears and open eyes, which turned to every rustling leaf, sometimes upon a dry sandy ground, but chiefly through a pestiferous swamp, into which we would every now and then sink to our knees, we wended, or rather pushed our way through the dense forest, at times elated at the appearance of an opening in the distance—but which, when reached, proved to be acres of marsh land, from which shot upward a forest of tall reeds, through which the tracks of tigers were plainly visible; at others, through tall grass which would have hidden mounted horsemen, and here and there beaten into circuitous paths by the waving form of some serpent. Thus, till we started a fine antelope, who, first gazing at us as if with aston-

tshment, suddenly scampered along the path, turning, however, now and then to gratify a curiosity which, had we not feared the report of the rifle, might have cost the noble animal his life, and provided us a meal.

"That beast is but the scout of a herd; and proves that a plain is at hand, sahib," said my companion.

And we passed onward through that forest, with its noble trees of sapan, which form an important item in the trade of the Hindoo-Chinese countries; the mighty teak, which rivals the oak in its capacities for ship-building; great oaks, inferior alone to those of old England; the pine-apple, the mango, the plantain; the tamarind, by which we sustained ourselves; the cotton-trees; the mimosa catechu, from which is taken the catechu or terra-japonica, which drug is obtained by boiling the wood cut down into chips, and inspissating or thickening the produce; and, lastly, the bamboo, which in Pegu grows to the extraordinary girth of twenty-four inches. I wonder—I have often wondered—that among the multitude of deities in the heathendom of the Malay and Indo-Chinese races, whose numbers are estimated at more than a third of the world's population, there is not one to be found dedicated to the bamboo.

To the bamboo as many sonnets have been penned in the East as to ladies' eyebrows and the eyes of the gazelle. It is life, death, food, clothes, everything; posts and walls of houses, rafters, floor, and thatch, as well as the withes that bind them together; scaffolding ladders, landing-jetties, fishing apparatus, irrigation wheels, scoops, oars, masts, sails, spars, arrows,

hats, helmets, bow, bowstring and quiver, oil-cans, water-stoups, cooking-pots, pipe-sticks, conduits, clothes-boxes, paint-boxes, dinner-trays, pickles, preserves, and melodious musical instruments; torches, footballs, cordage, bellows, mats, paper; and, indeed, so many other articles that it would require an entire chapter to record them. It may surprise you to be told that the bamboo makes capital soup—about which, by the way, the Chinese have a story. "A certain Mang sung, when young, lost his father, his mother was very sick; and one winter's day she longed to taste a soup of bamboo sprouts, but Mang could not procure any. At last he went into the groves of bamboo, clasped the trees with his hands and wept bitterly; his filial affection moved nature, and the ground slowly opened, sending forth several shoots, which he gathered and carried home. He made soup of them, of which his mother ate, and immediately recovered from her malady."

Then, as we entered upon a wide plain, sending scampering into the thickets a herd of antelopes, Naon exclaimed, "Truly, we are fortunate, for this is the Lain river."

"Then upon its banks must I rest, for I can go no further to-night," said I, squatting down upon the short grass.

"This is not wise, sahib, for it is to the river that by night the beasts of the forest prowl to slake their thirst," said Naon; adding, "Another effort and we may take shelter within a cave."

"A cave! Well, that is at least worth an effort,"

said I; and getting again upon my legs, I followed Naon along the banks of the stream by the side of a rocky cliff for about half a mile; when, stopping at some thick rushes, he said, as he pulled them aside,—

"As I expected; an old cave."

Yes; once the den of a tiger, or the haunt of snakes," said I, not half liking its appearance.

"Let us send a messenger to see," he replied, taking the rifle from my hands and firing it into the mouth.

There was a long reverberating sound; fortunately nothing more; but it was a mad-headed experiment, for, had it proved to have been tenanted by a tiger, nothing could have saved us from its claws. Being satisfied that the cave was clear, Naon stealthily entered; but, to my surprise, while I groped my way, feeling the slimy walls, and every now and then stumbled upon the uneven earth, he kept as steadily onward as if he had been accustomed to the place; but so exhausted was I by over-fatigue, so dark the cave, that the minute passed seemed half an hour. Moreover, I must confess that I did not feel supported by my usual pluck, and I said—

"Stay, Naon; let us return to the forest and get a bamboo torch."

"The sahib overrates his strength; he would never reach so far. Let him, however, follow; and if his servant is not mistaken, we shall not want a torch," he replied; and in another minute we entered an apartment hewn out of the sandstone rock, and lighted from above by a grating of about two feet square.

"Surely this has been the habitation of a human being," said I.

"Such it formerly was; and in this place thy servant once sought refuge from a storm upon this river, which is a branch of the Irrawaddy," said he; adding, "But let the sahib rest while his servant goes in search of a supper."

"Supper, here!" And as I thought the half caste was laughing at me, I threw myself upon the floor in no very good humor.

"First let the sahib refresh himself with the English liquor," said he, giving me the flask—a draught from which seemed to infuse new blood into my veins. Naon then having reloaded the rifle, and put a single cartridge in his pocket, gave the weapon to me, saying—"Let the sahib be on his guard while his servant goes in search of fuel," left me pondering, partly upon my queer fortunes, and partly upon my new habitation; which I afterward found to have been formerly the retreat of a Burman priest, who had excavated the cave with his own hands, and dwelt therein the remainder of his life, preserving no further intercourse with his fellow-creatures than that which was necessary to receive his food by means of ropes through the grating above.

By the way, it is worthy to be remarked that although, like the ascetics of Europe during the Middle Ages, the pious Burman holds it necessary to mortify the flesh by the voluntary penance of abstemiousness and self-denial, he does not inflict upon himself the disgusting tortures practised by the Hindoos

Although Naon was not absent for half an hour, the light of the sun had become changed for utter darkness. In those latitudes there is no twilight: the change from light to darkness—if there be no moon—is immediate, so that I gladly hailed the return of the half-caste, the more so as I saw that he brought with him a torch, which he had made by saturating a stick of bamboo in the natural oil, which exudes from the bark of the forest-trees, and lighted, by means of the powder in the cartridge, also a large bundle of fuel, *i.e.*, a kind of dried moss, and small clumps or branches of teak wood.

"Capital; for if we are obliged to go through the night without food, we shall at least have a fire to keep off the beasts," said I, believing the fuel was for the purpose of kindling a fire at the mouth of the cave.

"Stay, sahib; we will have a meal, too; some good venison."

"How, Naon? you are laughing at me."

"Not so, sahib; there is a herd of antelopes upon the plain. Heaven has sent us a meal. Let the sahib rest till his servant returns;" and Naon would have left the cave. As, however, I believed him to be going upon some dangerous expedition, I was determined he should not go alone, therefore, not heeding his remonstrances, I walked, or rather hobbled after him along the banks of the river, but when we came near the plain we had previously traversed, he said,—

"Let the sahib remain here, with his finger upon the trigger, and his servant will speedily return with a deer."

Compelled by exhaustion to comply, I sat down upon a hillock and watched his movements, but prepared to cover him with my rifle should he not go beyond reach of gunshot. With naked kreese in one hand, and in the other a blazing torch, which he flourished above his head, he crept stealthily along for some minutes; then I heard the sound of hoofs scampering toward me, and by the flames from the torch I could see a herd of antelopes, which, like moths attracted by the light, dashed onward, but suddenly, as if suspecting the real cause, the leader of the herd stood at bay, with its front legs thrown forward; a minute afterward, however, as if relieved from its suspicion, the gallant deer made another dash, and, as Naon had intended, the next instant fell pierced through the heart by his sword blade, when the dying shriek of the beast, and the shout of joy from the hunter, sent the frightened herd scampering across the plain. Naon, however, fearing that when recovered from their first alarm the noble beasts might return to the attack, caught hold of the hind legs of the slaughtered antelope and dragged it along the bank of the river into the cave; and although I felt a momentary pang of sorrow for the fate of the animal, like any other son of Adam with as keen an appetite, I became consoled when I saw a portion of its flesh smoking upon a large stone in the midst of the fire which Naon kindled in the centre of the cave just beneath the iron grating; which fire, by the way, served not only to dress our supper, but to frighten any four-footed visitors who might have been tempted by the

scent of the blood of the slain antelope to follow its track into our retreat.

Thus, having made a tolerable, though primitive meal, for the sword was our knife, our fingers our fork, and a piece of flat stone our sole dish, we threw fresh fuel upon the fire and sought to sleep, an attempt, however, from over-exhaustion—but chiefly from the mosquitos which came through the grating—rendered impossible, more especially as I was without a cover of any kind for my face. Although it is said that it is only the female of this insect that bites, she makes up for any deficiency in her male companion by sucking the blood in such a severe manner as to swell and blister the skin; indeed, it is pretty generally known, I believe, that these insects are found in the woods in such swarms that whoever enters them is sure to have his face covered so that he is scarcely able to see his way before him. A swelling and disagreeable irritation of the skin follows the puncture, which is succeeded by small white ulcers, so that the face is scarcely to be recognized; even gloves are not always found a protection against these insects, as their stings are sufficiently strong to pierce through the leather. My companion's skin must have been a little of the nature of the hide of a rhinoceros, for the mosquitos did not prevent him sleeping. When, however, the good-natured fellow awoke, suddenly—perhaps from a more than usually severe nip—and saw me sleepless, he said,—

"The sahib must endeavor to sleep, or he will not be fit for his journey."

"It is not possible with these winged brutes flying about, and nothing over my face and hands," said I.

"I have rested sufficient, let the sahib cover his face with this," said he, taking off the handkerchief which formed his head-dress.

"The attempt would be useless, Naon; I am too tired to sleep."

"The legs, the limbs; yes, sahib, but not here—not tired enough here," he replied, touching his forehead; then adding—

"Did the sahib ever hear the story of the Nine Princesses of the Silver Mountain?"

"It is a Burman play," said I.

"Yes, sahib; but the legend, the story. If the sahib has not heard it, it will help to send him to sleep."

"Then let us hear it, by all means, my good, dear Naon," said I, laughing.

Thus, for the very opposite purpose for which I shall repeat this legend did Naon tell it to me, namely, to induce sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NINE PRINCESSES OF THE SILVER MOUNTAIN.

Those immortal beings, who, for their perfection in this world, have been raised by Guadama to the state of Nats, or good spirits, are ruled over by a king, whose glittering palace of amber, gold, and rubies, is built upon the Silver Mountain—a mountain invisible too, and, except by magic, unapproachable by mortals, for it hath three barriers, namely, a belt of prickly cane, a stream of liquid copper, so refulgent that no human being can gaze upon it without becoming instantly blind—if, indeed, not calcined—and a hideous Beloo, or devil.

"Now, "once upon a time," as the old stories begin, this King of the Nats was blessed with no less than nine very beautiful daughters, who, either becoming tired of the eternal monotony of Natdom, or being tainted with the curiosity of their mortal sisters, begged of his majesty to permit them to go upon earth for a few hours' scamper; and so assiduously did they worry and torment the king, as, in fact, none but pet and spoiled young ladies can torment and worry, by what they are pleased to believe is only coaxing, that their papa, like many another foolish, good-natured old gentleman, at length not only granted their request, but gave each a charmed zone,

which should enable her to cut through the air, rather with the swiftness of an arrow than the grace of the antelope. Thus, having obtained their wish, and with the spirits of mortals, to whom holidays are a novelty, they instantaneously shot down like falling meteors, into a large forest; and, as fortune would have it, by the side of a lake, the waters of which were so translucent that they could not resist the temptation of plunging into its cool refreshing bosom, where, for hours, they continued to disport themselves like a bevy of water nymphs; although, having been born and educated in a very different element, how they learned to swim with the grace of swans must for ever remain amongst matters undiscovered.

Now it so happened that the very forest in which these ethereal damsels had chosen to spend their holiday, formed a portion of the dominions of the young King of Pyensa, a country, by the way, which I do not think you will find in the map, certainly not in modern maps; however, be that as it may, it has nothing whatever to do with my story. It is sufficient to tell you that the king had not long ascended the throne, when the chief of his astrologers, by some magic power—beauty, most likely—managed to make his royal master fall in love with, and make a queen of, his only daughter. He was an artful man, that astrologer, for by thus securing the crown to his daughter, he hoped to secure the power of the king in his own hands, and he succeeded.

As, however, the Prime Minister, Maha, had been in office so many years, he knew the character of all

persons of any note in the kingdom, and amongst others, those of the astrologer and his daughter, the new queen: and as what he did know of them was not by any means to their advantage, he feared for his much-loved master; and, moreover, with greater honesty than prudence, volunteered a remonstrance. Now, although this presumption much vexed the king, he was under such obligations to the old minister, who, in fact, had been the chief means of raising him to the throne, that he could make no immediate reply. Nevertheless, much enraged, he sought the advice of his astrologer and father-in-law, who so persuaded the young monarch that the following day, when the whole court was assembled, pointing through a window to some scaffolding which surrounded a newly-erected and magnificent pagoda, the king said—

"Open thy lips, oh venerable Maha, and tell us what the workmen do with the scaffolding when the pagoda is finished."

"Is it possible," said Maha, falling to the earth, "is it possible that the Golden Lord of the earth can doubt that it is taken down and carried away that it may not obstruct the view of the pagoda, or spoil its beauty?"

"Truly," replied the king, "wisdom alone should proceed from the lips of the learned Maha. As the workmen have used that scaffolding to build the pagoda, so have I made use of you to ascend the throne. But now that I am firmly seated your presence only disturbs my peace; therefore, since thou hast presumed to raise thy slave's voice against our chief

queen, yet, remembering your past services, we banish you for life to the woods,—except, O Maha, thou canst bring to the foot of our throne a lady who, both in virtue and beauty, is more than mortal."

Thus was the minister driven into the forest, where, by hunting and fishing, he was to subsist the remainder of his life. One day a dreadful tempest arose, in the course of which he observed that the great trees which resisted the force of the wind were not bent, but broken, or torn up by its fury; while the grass and the canes, yielding before the blast, returned to their original position the moment it was gone by.

"Oh!" said he, "if I had followed the example of these canes and this grass I should not now be in so miserable a condition."

"Grieve not, O man of virtue, for is it not written, that the greatest blessings are nearest to the greatest misfortunes?' said a voice.

Maha, gazed upward, around; it was only a voice, nothing was to be seen but a silken cord upon the ground at his feet.

"Doubtless," he muttered, "the voice of a guardian Nat. Miserable Maha, to despair when Guadama has thee in his protection. But this cord—I saw it not before I heard the voice." Then gazing at it, he added, "the Nats alone must be thanked, for this rope was never twisted by mortal hands; it must be, it is, a charmed noose, from which the fleetest deer may not escape my hands." Thus pondering, he walked onward, when suddenly, as if frightened by the storm, a beautiful damsel fled by him, with more than

the fleetness of the antelope. He called aloud to allay her fears; but the more he called the quicker she fled. For an instant she looked around; Maha held up his arm beseechingly, when, to his surprise, the noose of silk jerked itself from his hands and fell over the arm of the fair creature.

"The gods be praised! some great event is about to happen!" he exclaimed, and in another minute the girl was at his feet imploring mercy, a very unnecessary supplication, for to Maha she appeared the spirit of mercy; indeed she could be no other than the more than mortal beauty the king had tauntingly commanded him to bring to the foot of the throne as the price of his restoration to favor.

It need scarcely be told that the beauteous damsel was the youngest of the Nat princesses of the silver mountain, who, frightened by the storm, had escaped from the lake, but either by accident or magic influence, having lost the zone by which alone she could reascend with her sisters to her father's palace, had fled, she knew not where.

Now, as by the loss of her zone the aerial young lady had become reduced to the level of a mere ordinary mortal, she was not backward in accepting from an elderly gentleman, who, notwithstanding his melancholy, had the appearance of having seen better days, such worldly terms as a fine palace, numerous servants, and a handsome young king for a husband.

Of course, as in all similar instances, the young king no sooner set eyes upon the beauty than he made her his chief queen, and restored the minister to his

old rank, honors, and emoluments, very much to the disgust of the established queen, and her father, the artful astrologer, both of whom at once resolved to ruin the new wife with the least possible delay.

It so happened, some months after the king's new marriage, that a great king of a neighboring country invaded Pyensa, and put the people to fire and sword, in spite of all the renowned generals the young king had sent to oppose him; and as, moreover, at the same time, the whole kingdom became covered with a plague of locusts, so thick that the cavalry could scarcely manœuvre, and the ripening food of the people was being all demolished, the multitude began to rebel, and to exhibit symptoms of an inclination to desert to the invader. In this strait, the king, finding he could obtain no good advice from his council, was compelled to apply to the astrologer, who, after, many days spent over fire—in which, by the way, it was said there was a smell of brimstone—and in consultation with his mysterious deities, said—

"Know, O possessor of the only great throne in the world, that these many troubles are owing to an evil spirit, who hating the king of the Nats, is determined to wreak his vengeance upon his daughter, and all who befriend her. Therefore, O mighty lord of many elephants, kingdoms, and mines of precious stones, even at the risk of losing his head will thy slave speak the truth. The queen Mauree, who should be the blossom, is but the blight of the world."

Upon hearing this the king, after the decisive fashion of Asiatic princes, would at once have given

a wink to the tall black slave, who, with a glittering two-edged sword, stood ready upon the instant to convert the head of a refractory minister into a foot-ball, but for the loud cries of many voices outside the palace gates.

The truth was, the astrologer and the queen had been disseminating the same story about the unhappy Mauree among the people; in consequence of which, that hydra-but light-headed noun of multitude was then clamoring for the new queen's head to be thrown out of the window. Thus his majesty permitted the astrologer's head to remain under his turban, at least for a time. As for poor Mauree, what could the still more to be pitied king do? Nothing, absolutely nothing; but first, to appease the people, order the head of a maid of honor to be decorated with the royal head-dress, and then thrown out to them. After which, he ordered Mauree to be hidden in one of the attics of the palace, hoping that time might enable him to make better terms with the astrologer's evil spirit than having to destroy his beautiful queen.

Thus, having taken, as he thought, means for the safety of the beautiful Nat, his majesty went to the wars; and having killed the invading king, prepared to return to his palace in great triumph; but arriving at the city gates too late at night for his army to make a triumphant entry, and impatient to congratulate Mauree, he passed into the city alone, and entered the palace by a secret gate, and with beating heart crept softly up the stairs to her chamber, thinking to give her a surprise. The surprise, however,

was fated to be for him; for, opening the door—there, instead of Mauree, stood the queen number one, like another Eleanor, a dagger in one hand and a cup of poison in the other, with her papa, the astrologer, by her side holding a lamp. The comparison, however, with the Queen Eleanor picture fell short of the principal figure, for there was no fair Rosamond, that is, Mauree. No, the would-be assassins were staring in disappointed surprise through the opened window at the silvery moonbeams, upon one of which the fair Nat and an elderly lady seemed to be gradually floating out of sight—that elderly lady was the mother of Mauree. How she came to be floating upon a moonbeam I will now explain.

When the eight princesses returned to the silver mountain without their youngest sister, great was the misery of the king, their parent; who, however, sending for his secretary-of-state for foreign affairs, to whose department all transactions with the lower world appertained, and finding from that minister that his daughter had become mortalized, and a queen, and was moreover very comfortable and happy, the old gentleman thought it as well to let matters remain as they were, only commanding the secretary to continue to keep him well informed as to his daughter's well-being.

One day the minister, with a melancholy face, told the king and queen of the trouble that had fallen upon the princess; and, moreover, that that very night the astrologer and his daughter, the rival queen, intended to enter the attic and offer Mauree the choice of a

cup of poison or dagger. At this news the queen of the Nats buckled on one flying zone, and taking another for her daughter, shot down to the window ledge of the queen Mauree's attic. Scarcely, however, had she informed the queen of the coming danger, and placed the zone around her waist, when the astrologer, the old queen, and, as we have seen, the king himself, entered the doorway to—well, as it resulted, do nothing more than stare with surprise at the flight of the intended victim.

Then so great was the rage of the king of Pyensa at seeing his favorite queen upon the wing, that with one blow he cut off the heads of both the would-be assassins; after which he fled to a neighboring mountain, where, in anguish and tears, he wandered the whole of the night, till from fatigue he fell down to sleep, and dreamt that his beautiful but flown away Nat, Mauree, after hovering over him for a few minutes, laid a golden circlet upon his forehead, saying—

"By means of this ring, oh, my husband, shall thy trouble end; take it, and fear not, for it will bring thee to the gate of my father's palace."

The pleasure awoke the king, when, imagine his surprise and delight to find himself lying near a fountain of perfumed water upon the top of a mountain, so wondrously beautiful that it would be impossible for mortal power to describe it. He rubbed his eyes, for he believed he still dreamt; but no, there could be no mistake, for there, upon his finger, was the very ring.

The Princess Mauree was in her private apartments, surrounded by her maids of honor, one of whom, preparing her bath, was pouring from a crystal jar perfumed water into the porphyry vessel, when, perceiving a ring fall into the bath, she exclaimed, "My husband! my husband!" and fainted in the arms of her maids, who, fearing she had been attacked by some strange disorder, hastened to the king of the Nats, who, finding that his daughter's illness had been caused by the sight of a ring, cruelly ordered the waiting-maids to be starved till they had discovered from whence that ring had come. Whereupon, the maid who had fetched the perfumed water said that as she was coming from the fountain with the jar upon her head, a handsome young mortal had approached her, and having discovered that the water was for the bath of the Princess Mauree, had dropped the ring into the jar.

A stranger venturing into his dominions, and one too who must have encountered (for so the king thought) and vanquished the terrible Beloo, or devil-guard, to say nothing of the belt of prickly canes and stream of boiling copper—it was terrible, it was presumptuous; and not even though the Princess, who by this time had recovered, declared the stranger to be her husband and a king, could the royal Nat be pacified. His family pride was hurt. What was a king of mortals in comparison with him? Never was a royal Nat so stung with rage.

However, as we have seen at the commencement of the legend, a pretty daughter, especially if she be

as good as Mauree undoubtedly was, can do much to soften the heart of even a hard-hearted father, which the king of the Nats was not; so, by dint of coaxing, crying, and smiling through her tears, every one of which seemed a wasted pearl to his majesty, the latter agreed to forgive her husband's presumption, conditionally—that he would tame his wildest elephant, ride his fiereest and most savage horse, and send an arrow out of a bow that no man in Natdom had strength enough to bend, right through the ring at a distance of a hundred yards.

Now, most people would have thought these conditions rather hard, but then everything is possible to the hero of a fairy story, and so the young king proved to the satisfaction of a court very jealous of a mortal being established therein as a resident; and this jealousy was not unfounded, for there is no doubt that with the wisdom of a Nat the king foresaw the troubles that *Residents* would ultimately bring upon the kingdoms of India beneath his own states.

Alas, however, there was another trial for the king of Pyensa to undergo before he would be permitted to claim Mauree—no less, indeed, than recognising her by her little finger. For this purpose he was introduced into a chamber, across which was suspended a large curtain of yellow silk. The king of the Nats gave a signal, and immediately the tips of nine little fingers shot throughas many little holes in the curtain.

The king of Pyensa's heart beat. How was he to tell which was Mauree's finger. He rubbed his eyes, scratched his head, pushed his hair off his forehead,

and inwardly prayed to his gods. All of no use; for a time he would not choose. At length he began to examine one after the other; but like the chalk marks upon the house doors in the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, they were all alike. What could he do? Nothing but wish for the gifts of knowedge. Ah, yes, that was it. He had heard that gifts were marked upon the nails; so passing one, two, three, four, he found that all the nails were alike, but upon the fifth there were three white spots set in the blushing crimson, the sixth finger had two spots, the remaining fingers none; he touched the fifth, it moved, he had made his choice, and the next moment the beautiful Mauree was by his side, when the king of the Nats, like all good fathers in romances, forgave the runaway marriage, and—of course they were happy for ever afterward.

CHAPTER X.

CHASED BY A CROCODILE.

ALTHOUGH this story was based upon a Burmese play, and will therefore afford you some notion of the ingredients of the national drama, it was in the main, I afterward discovered, the creation of the fertile brain of Naon, who had so thoroughly acquired the style and soft tones of the professional story tellers of the East, that it had the desired effect, for it soothed me to sleep and pleasant dreams in spite of the mosquitoes.

The next morning I awoke not only refreshed, but much sounder both in mind and limb, and we continued our journey, keeping close alongside the banks of the river, but at the same time a sharp look-out for both crocodiles and tigers, which infest those parts, and frequent the banks—the former for the purpose of laying its eggs in the sand, and seeking chance prey, the latter for the purpose of slaking the burning thirst that so continuously torment all animals of the tiger kind. Proceeding about a mile along the river, we came to a deep thicket, indeed almost a shrubbery, which had grown some distance into the river.

"Truly, sahib, we are most fortunate as we may save our legs for a better purpose," said Naon, pointing to a large boat, or rather canoe, hollowed from the trunk of a tree while green, which was moored near the bank.

"But the owner may be at hand, and object to our appropriating his boat," said I, rather annoyed at Naon's evident loose notions of *meum et tuum.*

"Truly, it is a stray canoe, which we can use, and leave at the first village," said he.

"It is not so, Naon; see, there are the owners," said I, as at that moment two men approached, who, with the exception of a pair of loose trowsers, a fillet of linen around their heads, were naked; and who, from the shield upon the left arm, and the long sabre, which is always carried for the purpose of defence against wild beasts, felling trees, and shaping timber, I knew to be ordinary peasants.

"Nevertheless we are fortunate, for they are carianers, and will carry us to their village."

Before, however, he could address the men they crouched to the earth, fixing their eyes upon a small tree, and crawled stealthily forward. This movement aroused my curiosity, and, looking narrowly, I saw upon a branch an animal of the lizard kind. It was about eleven inches in length, nearly half of which was a tail, by which it seemed to hold to the branch, and move itself backward or forward. The body was bluish-gray, its skin grained with globular inequalities, like shagreen; no ears, at least visible; a large head, fixed and immovable, except with the body; two very small eyes, of piercing brightness, which were covered with a skin like its body; the grain, however, of this was in concentric circles to the middle, where there was a hole no larger than a pin's head, and through which it received the light. These

eyes, I afterward learned, are remarkable for being independent of each other, and capable of all the different necessary motions, for the animal can either turn them both at the same time, or one backward and the other forward, one upward and the other downward, or can keep one fixed upon one object, whilst the other is moving according to the motion of another.

At the moment this curious little animal attracted my attention its eyes were fixed upon a swarm of flies, one of which it caught by suddenly darting forth a tongue nearly as long as its body, and which, I found, nature has supplied with a kind of sheath.

"They are chameleon hunting," said Naon, perceiving my curiosity; and thus I first became acquainted with one of those wonderful little creatures about which so many fables have been told. 'To live upon air like a chameleon' is an old simile, which has its origin in the simple fact that the animal is capable of drawing in a vast supply of air, which it has also the power of driving over every part of the body between the skin and the muscles. As for the fable that it can assume the color of every object it approaches, it is simply an exaggeration of the fact that from its pale gray or mouse color, it will frequently change to green, spotted with yellow, dark brown, light brown, and sometimes red, but nearly always with a bluish tint. Previously to changing its hue the animal makes a long inspiration, which causes the body to swell out to twice its natural size, and as this inflation subsides the change gradually

takes place. The cause of this variety of colors is supposed to be, first, that the blood is of a violet blue, the vessels yellow, the outer skin colorless and transparent, and the inner skin yellow; so that the changes depend upon the mixture of blue and yellow, from which result different shades of green. Thus, if provoked, when well fed, the blood is carried in greater abundance from the heart to the extremities and swelling the vessels of the skin, the blue subdues the yellow, and produces a blue-green, which is seen through the transparent outer-skin. When, on the contrary, the animal is impoverished from want of free air the vessels become more empty, and its color becomes of a yellow green.

Thus you see the foolish boast which originated, I believe, among the Spanish Hidalgos, and is so often repeated among Englishmen, who wish to be thought of aristocratic birth, that they are *blue bloods*, or having blue blood in their veins, is, in reality, only the attribute of the chameleon.

But, to continue my narrative. The ground between myself and the chameleon hunters was occupied by a portion of the thicket, a kind of leafy underwood, which being beaten down by what I mistook to be a fallen tree, left open to my view the little animal in whose safety from the hunters I felt so much interested that I moved some yards in advance of Naon. It was then that the chameleon hunters saw me for the first time, and (as I for the instant supposed) fearing I should alarm their game, called aloud to me to "beware the crocodile." Almost

simultaneously came the crack of the rifle, and a shriek from Naon. The warning came too late. I had stepped upon the animal. Heaven alone preserved me. With one bound I leaped forward many feet, and a thrill of delight ran through my frame as I caught sight of the boat. A few leaps and I reached it; but, looking back to the shore, my heart seemed to be rising into my mouth, for the tree, against which I had stumbled in the thicket, was in full chase after me—no longer, however, in the shape of a tree, but that of a huge crocodile, which was fast gaining the water's edge. Terror for a moment paralyzed my hands. I could not unloosen the cord by which the boat was moored. Another crack of the rifle; fortunately a double-barrelled piece, or the monster would have had me in its jaws. Another report; a shot hit its tail; at the same instant a short javelin from the thicket struck its head, nearly piercing the eye, at which it had been aimed, and, although harmless to the monster, since both ball and javelin glided off its scales, saved my life; for, thus annoyed from behind, it turned around for an instant as if to attack its rearward enemies, and that one turn gave me time to push off from the shore, where, however, I seemed in yet greater danger, for, determined not easily to give up its prey, the animal had taken to the water, and in a minute or so was within a very short distance of the boat.

My position was dangerous in the extreme. Alone, without rifle or spear, in a small boat, which, by one blow from its tail, the animal might capsize the mo-

ment it got within reach; and that it would do so seemed certain, for, although its speed upon land had been by far greater than some naturalists have said it has the power to run, that speed became increased tenfold in its native element. Paddling with the oars for my life, with the scaly reptile in my wake, it was many minutes before I observed, some distance ahead, several boats, the crews of which were shouting to me to beware "the line." The shouts strengthened my nerves, and although the beast was making upon me, I cared not, but quicker and quicker went my paddles, till I got within a yard of the line which was drawn across the river, when I confess to a feeling of despair. The brute had so far gained upon me, that its snout rubbed against the stern; another yard and its tail would have full play, the boat would be swamped. Then came loud shoutings from the boats, Heaven added to my vigor, faster and faster I strove, till the boat glided over the line, when I rested upon my paddles. Now my turn had come. The crews of the boats were professional crocodile hunters. The line was the running cord of a great bamboo net, among the meshes of which the beast had become entangled, and was now floundering about, lashing its tail so violently that no boat dared venture near; and thus, after struggling for nearly two hours, the brute expended its great strength.

Then the boats drew nearer, and their crews darted forth their javelins: some pierced its eyes, others its stomach, the only vulnerable parts, till perceiving, by the great loss of blood, and its motionless position, it

was nearly dead, they dragged it ashore. I followed; and need not tell you was warmly congratulated upon my escape by Naon, who with tears in his eyes continued to repeat for some minutes—

"May the Lord of heaven be praised, for the sahib's escape was miraculous."

As for the natives, they crowded around, fell upon their hands and knees, and after their heathen fashion almost worshipped me, for having been the means of delivering their great enemy into their hands. That you may understand the meaning of this, I must tell you that the river upon which this adventure happened is at times infested with crocodiles, which commonly seize natives who may be walking near the water's edge; and becoming emboldened by success, as had been the case with this particular animal, they become the terror of every boat's crew who passes that portion of the river which the animal has made its hunting-ground. The animal's mode of attack is to glide silently up to the bow or stern of the boat, and then turn suddenly, when, with one dash of its powerful tail it sweeps into the water whoever may be within reach; and, as a matter of course, the stunned men become an easy prey.

Now, notwithstanding the charms given to them by their priests to protect them from crocodiles, for some months scarcely a day had passed without some man having fallen a prey to this animal; consequently it had become the terror of the neighboring country; and although nets—the usual means by which they are taken in Pegu—had been thrown across the river

for many weeks, and constantly watched, the crocodile had been too wary for its enemies, and had escaped, till it lost, I suppose, its presence of mind in its hot chase after myself. Thus, having ensnared the brute, I was almost worshipped by the natives, and by none more than the chameleon hunters, who were father and son, and had recently lost a near and dear relative, who, while steering his boat, had been knocked from his post into the water, and afterward devoured.

Resolved to make the most of my advantage—when I had watched the other boatmen tie up the beast's mouth, fasten its head to its tail, and its fore feet over its back (had they not done this, it might yet have done them mischief)—I begged of the grateful chameleon hunters to carry us to their village—a request with which they readily complied; so when I had taken farewell of the crocodile hunters, and my new friends had secured their stock of lizards and chameleons, which they had hidden in a hole near the thicket, we embarked.

CHAPTER XI.

I HEAR THE STORY OF A DESPOT, AND HAVE AN ADVENTURE WITH SOME QUEER FISH.

Once afloat, the Carians sent their boat through the waters with a velocity only to be accomplished by Burmans, and we passed through a country, which upon the one side of the river was low and swampy, but upon the other magnificent, from the chain of hills which, commencing almost with hillocks near the river, arose in height till they terminated in the distant but lofty mountains of Arracan.

This Arracan, now a dreary province of Anglo-India, was once the seat of one of those gorgeous Asiatic empires whose foul doings have brought upon them their own punishment; and the story I am about to relate is not only illustrative of the tremendous power and wickedness of its kings—for one was the type of the many—but of the slavery of the people, who I am inclined to think deserved all they met with for their submission. It is the story of a modern Herod, and was told by one Sebastian Manrique, a friar of St. Augustin, who visited India as a missionary in 1612, and repeated to me by Naon, who had learned it from a book of the friar's travels, which had been in the possession of his father, a fellow countryman of the missionary.

Prophecies have ever met with ready belief in the East. Now, prior to the Father Manrique's entrance into Arracan, a prediction had long been current that the Emperor of Arracan, within one, or at most two, years after his coronation would be slain. To escape this fate the then monarch had postponed his coronation for nearly nine years, but, as by the law, if he delayed the ceremony over that period, he would forfeit the crown, he found himself in an awkward dilemma, out of which he saw no other escape than by the aid and advice of a celebrated Mahommedan sage.

This worthy, perhaps to suit some secret ambitious purpose of his own, or more probably from a love of wickedness, replied, that there was one method by which his majesty could not only escape the threatened fate, but at the same time become invincible, and extend his dominion over the surrounding empires of Siam, Pegu, Ava, and Delhi.

The promised result was brilliant; the means, however, by which it was to be obtained, was according to the sage, to offer to the gods a sacrifice of six thousand human hearts, four thousand hearts of white cows, and two thousand hearts of pigeons. Now, do you not think such an inhuman suggestion incredible as a piece of sober human history, indeed anywhere out of a pantomime or a goblin story? Incredible, however, as it appears, this demoniac sovereign acted upon it.

Like another Herod, he immediately sent troops to seize all those of his subjects who could be found

either in the streets or in the fields, till the fatal number was completed. Those seized during the day were carried at night to a deep hollow between two lofty mountains, where the sacrifices were performed.

"The visible executioner," says the worthy friar, who was present in Arracan at the time of the slaughter, "being no doubt attended by invisible witnesses from the world below."

The horror excited by this butchery it is impossible to describe. The wretched and trembling people durst not stir out of their houses, and the streets became a desert. A thousand pities there was no Arracanese House of Commons, whose members might have led their constituents against this tyrant, as those of the English Parliament did at one period of our history.

Finding sufficient victims could not be obtained in the city, emissaries were sent into the neighboring towns and country, where the people were less upon their guard. The great number of victims required, however, seem at length to have aroused even an Asiatic slavedom, for the cries of the multitude rose to such a height that an insurrection would infallibly have taken place, had it not been for an announcement that the sacrifice prepared for the impious altars of the nether kingdom was now completed, and that the coronation would take place within six months; which at once not only dispelled the fears of the people, but delighted them with the prospect of the merry doings to take place at the approaching ceremony.

"But, my good Naon," I exclaimed, interrupting him, "is it possible that a people ever existed so base and cowardly in themselves not only to have forgotten the sufferings of their fellows, but to permit so great a wretch to reign any longer over them?"

"Let the sahib listen, and he will hear."

I became silent, and Naon continued.

"The six months were employed without intermission throughout the whole kingdom in making preparations, and, in particular, a copious supply was brought of the holy waters from Sagur. As the day approached, such crowds came from all the kingdoms, states, and cities of Indostan, Ava, Siam, Sumatra, and other various islands and countries, that Arracan became, as it were, an epitome of the East.

"The ceremonies commenced with the coronation of twelve kings, each of whom was to reign over one of the provinces subject to Arracan. On this occasion, the supreme tyrant being seated on a splendid throne, with all his lords in attendance, the king was introduced, who, on approaching the throne, began a series of bows and prostrations, which ended with his laying himself flat upon the ground, to which he riveted his lips. In this posture he remained till four lords came and lifted him up. On approaching a little nearer, he repeated the same series of prostrations, and so on for four or five times; but on being raised the fifth time, he found himself close to the imperial throne."

"A golden idol, three feet high, with a garland of flowers on its head, was then brought forth. The

king took it in his hand, and after six prostrations, placed it on his head, and pronounced a solemn oath of allegiance to the tyrant, who immediately declared that his vassal's head was worthy of becoming the temporary resting-place of part of his own imperial foot.

"The great trumpet being then blown thrice, the whole assembly (fit nobles of a fitting people fell prostrate on the ground, upon which a curtain being drawn, the tyrant became hidden from the view of the court. Eight days elapsed between the coronation of each king, which period was spent by the last one crowned in magnificent processions by land and water, and in keeping open table for all the citizens.

"The coronation of the kings being completed, the crowd of strangers daily increased, and the city assumed a more brilliant aspect; that city, be it remarked, which had so recently been the theatre of such a fearful slaughter. The outsides of the houses were hung with cloths of cotton, silk, and embroidery; the streets were adorned with triumphal arches, and echoed with the sound of music, the beating of drums, and the discharge of artillery. The loyal merchants took the opportunity of holding a fair, in which all that was most rare and precious in the East was profusely exhibited.

"On the evening before the grand ceremony, the whole city was filled with standards, pendants, and streamers of various colors which kept waving in the wind. The morning rose clear and beautiful, and was ushered in with the firing of cannon. At the

appointed hour all the kings, princes, and lords repaired to an immense hall with a golden roof, and supported by thirty gilded pillars. Three sides were open, and the fourth hung with rich tapestry, hiding from view the large arched space in which the monarch was seated. All the grandees having taken their places, five blasts were blown with the great trumpet, and during the next half hour there was one continued roar of artillery.

"A profound silence followed, but when the trumpet was again blown, the whole assembly fell prostrate to the ground. The curtain being then drawn aside, exhibited the imperial assassin seated upon a lofty throne blazing with gems and gold. His robe was entirely covered with pearls, and on his feet were silken sandals laden with diamonds. His head was merely wrapt in white cloth; but from the ears depended two of the emblems of royalty called chanequas, and which surpassed in splendor every other object. After some superstitious ceremonies, the chief priest delivered a lengthy discourse, in which he painted the *virtues* and *perfections* of this wholesale assassin in such terms that, if one half had been true, as Manrique says, he would have deserved canonization.

"The sermon of 'this false preacher' being ended, the whole assembly broke up, and proceeded in regular order and pomp till they arrived at the gate of a large court, into which they entered. Here, however, only the believers in the national faith being admitted, Manrique and the Portuguese were denied entrance.

They waited for two hours, at the end of which all the artillery in the city was discharged at once with a roar so tremendous as if the world were going to wreck. The gates were then thrown open, and the monarch issued forth, wearing on his head the imperial crown, which glittered all over with pearls, rubies, and diamonds. He then repaired to a court, where stood twelve hundred elephants richly caparisoned, on which he and his lords mounted and rode in solemn procession through the city, horsemen clearing the way before them.

"Great was the acclamation of the multitude. The ladies of the Court appeared stationed at different points, with their faces unveiled and covered with the richest jewels. At length the monarch arrived at the palace, and was received by his empress, who, according to the custom of the country, was also his eldest sister, and this long-protracted festival was brought to a close."

"Thus, I meditated, did this population of slaves reward, instead of punish, the odious tyrant who had plunged thousands into grief by the murder of their relations. Thus has it ever been with the peoples of the East—by turns wolves or lambs—always ready to oppress the weak, or lick the feet of the bold and fearless; and thus is it that their own savage, treacherous nature has encompassed their ruin, and affords the best of excuses for their conquest by the remote races of Europe—our own in particular, which, by the introduction of Christian civilization, must at least not only raise the people in the scale of creation, but

teach them the true and human uses of the vast natural wealth by which they are surrounded; for in eastern Asia many are the countries which, although now trodden almost alone by the beasts and reptiles of the forest, teem with gold, precious stones, iron, copper, and soils so rich that, if but properly cultivated by the sons of the West, starvation and want might be erased from the world.

My meditations, however, were cut short by the Carians, who, having rested upon their paddles to partake of a meal of gnapee, a kind of half-pickled sprat, tea, and rice prepared in small pellets, cried out, "tet-tet, tet-tet," at the same time hanging over the boat, and looking along the water in the direction of the shore.

"A crocodile, Naon," said I, startled.

"Not crocodile—not crocodile, sahib, but fish, pet fish; the boatmen are calling them to come and be fed." And in a few minutes, to my surprise, the boat was literally surrounded by what I took to be dog-fish, for they were blunt-snouted, broad-mouthed, with brown skin dotted with black spots, and between three and four feet in length.

As the fish neared the boat, the Carians continued to cry "tet-tet," when the finny creatures thrust half their bodies vertically out of the water, and opened their mouths to receive the pellets of rice which were thrown down their throats. The most curious fact, however, was, that the fish seemed to be upon terms of acquaintanceship with the Carians, for each, when it had swallowed its rice, returned to the

boat for more; and while awaiting their turns to be served, submitted, nay, seemed to enjoy being stroked down the back as one would stroke a cat. Thus, watching these finny creatures, I had a full half-hour's amusement, for before that time I had not heard of such a curiosity.

"Recently, however, Captain Yale, in a clever book in which he recounts his visit to Ava, tells us that he witnessed a similar scene; and further says: "During March, I am told, there is a great festival, and it is a very common trick for the people to get some fish into the boat, and even gild their backs by attaching some gold leaf, as they do in the ordinary way pagodas." (In the Burmese dominions gold is plentiful, being indigenous to the soil; and except for coin, for which it is not made available, it is used very lavishly in gilding and ornamentation.) The Captain adds that on one of the fish he saw the remains of the gilding. "I wished," he writes, "to take one away as a specimen, but the people seemed to think it would be a kind of sacrilege, so I said nothing more on the point." The phoongyis (priests) are in the habit of feeding them daily, I was informed. Their place of abode is the deep pool formed at the back of an island by the two currents meeting round its sides.

Thus, you see, even fish of the shark kind may be tamed by kindness and attention. I must, however, add that this curious scene is not common even in Burma, for the place where it is to be seen is visited by numbers of persons who travel great distances to witness it.

CHAPTER XII.

I HAVE A MISUNDERSTANDING WITH SOME BUFFALOES.

About an hour after the adventure with the dogfish, we reached a small village built upon the banks. This place contained about forty small houses, erected, as usual, upon posts, and, to my astonishment, apparently populated alone with aged men, women, and children. The younger men, however, I afterward discovered, had been sent by the government to the sea-side to make salt, and thus, as it were pay their taxes by the labor of their hands.

Apropos of salt, although the greater part of that consumed in the empire is manufactured at the sea-side, a considerable quantity is made in the Sagaing mountains, where there is a lake, the waters of which afford material for this condiment; and at each end of which there are villages whose inhabitants are entirely devoted to the making of salt, which is prepared as follows:—

Having first scraped the soil from the borders of the lake, they place it in large square troughs raised on posts, the bottoms of which are lined with straw laid over a few cross sticks. Beneath the troughs, attached to either side, are two frames of bamboo and straw, which meet at the bottom, acting as a kind of funnel. Over the earth, placed in the troughs, there is

poured a quantity of water, obtained either from the lake or from wells close to the manufacture; the brine thus falling down from the troughs is farther strained and purified by passing through the straw-frames, from which it is conveyed to pots and boiled, without undergoing any farther purification. The revenue derived from this manufacture is considerable, and is enjoyed by one of the princes of the blood royal, who is therefore entitled the "Eater of the villages."

Deserted as this village was by the men, the women and children no sooner heard that we brought the news of the death of the terrible crocodile, than they offered us presents of food—they had nothing else to offer, but a fervent gratitude, which they exhibited by their hospitality.

As, however, our object was to teach the Carian village before sundown, as soon as the boatmen had consigned their boat to the care of one of the villagers, and had harnessed a bullock to a cart, we took our farewell and departure.

The prospect of a ride in this bullock cart was exhilarating to our spirits, as it was but a symptom of better roads than any we had hitherto experienced since our departure from Rangoon; and so we found them, for instead of close, densely-packed forests, we now had open and tolerably dry grounds. An hour, scarcely more, and by the large patches, at intervals, of rice culture, and the thick groves of banana, we should have guessed, even if our guide had not informed us, that we were near an agricultural village

Passing through a banana grove, we entered upon an extensive grass plain, when, catching sight of a herd of antelopes, I seized the rifle, and descended from the cart, saying, "I will have a shot at one of those beasts; it will afford us a good supper."

"Can you get within gun-shot of them, sahib?" said Naon, doubtingly.

"Can I not?" I replied conceitedly, for I was a capital shot; and confident of success, I crept stoopingly through the long grass, calculating the distance with my eye.

The herd was quietly grazing just within range of my rifle; I thought my aim sure, a sportsman's pleasure thrilled through my frame, crack went my piece, and I started upon my feet—but with chagrin, for I knew Naon would laugh at my conceit when he saw the splendid creatures at full gallop across the plain, startled, but untouched by the bullet.

Yet I had succeeded in doing more than startle the deer. I had attracted the attention of a drove of cream-colored buffaloes, which, although alarmed at the report of the rifle, did not, as I expected, scamper away frightened, but with impudent effrontery stood staring at me with their fore legs stretched forth as if prepared and in expectation of an attack from me. Of course it was not my intention even to provoke these formidable creatures, for I knew them to be the domesticated animals of the neighboring villages; but seeing them thus present so warlike a front, I was not by any means so sure of their peaceable intentions; and this was not at all agreeable,

for I remembered to have heard that, if fired at, and not mortally wounded, these animals will pursue the sportsman till they overtake him, or in their rage dash themselves against the first tree or wall that comes in their way. For five minutes I stood looking at them, and still they remained quiet, not even bellowing. This gave me confidence, and so I unhesitatingly walked toward them.

The nearer, however, I approached them, the more evident it appeared that there was some incomprehensible misunderstanding between us, for then, two —a kind of deputation from the general body—with their tails and heads erect, trotted toward me, not in a straight line, but making a half-circle, as if, although anxious to make themselves acquainted with my business, they were yet half afraid of making the first advance. I did not quite like this deputation, but as they were too near for me to think of flight, for then they would assuredly have overtaken and gored me, I moved toward them at an ambling pace, in an oblique direction, stopping now and then with my face toward them; each time, as I turned, the animals stood still and gazed at me intently, moving, however, directly I moved, and stopping when I stopped. I was more alarmed than ever; surely, I thought, they are but awaiting an opportunity to rush upon me when my back is turned toward them; so thinking, I took a circuitous course—the animals did the same; one, however, advancing to within a couple of yards of me. "Oh, oh!" I muttered; "if

this means fight, I must prepare; if only fun, it is too much familiarity upon so short an acquaintance."

Some old cynic has said, "that we ought to treat our friends as if they were some day to be our enemies." I intended adopting his advice, and fortunately, having the cartridge-pouch with me, I managed to reload my rifle while walking; but no sooner had I done this than I thought the crisis had arrived, for one of the deputation bolder than his colleague, came still nearer, as if preparing to make a direct run with his horns, which I at once almost imagined between my ribs. This could be borne no longer—I would fire. At the moment I heard Naon shouting to me, though what he said I could not distinguish; but when I saw him dash his own head-dress to the ground, I comprehended his meaning; and vexed that I had not myself thought of it, I took the red handkerchief from my head and threw it some distance into the grass. Then the misunderstanding between us became cleared up, for the two animals, as if perfectly satisfied, instantly turned tail and went back to rejoin the drove, quietly grazing on their way.

Thus did a red handkerchief around my head cause me so much trouble and anxiety, and probably a narrow chance of being gored to death; for, had I fired without killing the beast, such would undoubtedly have been my fate. Naturalists can only account for the singular hatred of some beasts to the color red, from the fact of their intense fear of fire, which resembles that color. Yet this explanation is not sat

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isfactory, for while they flee from fire, they rush toward red objects.

"The Lord of heaven be praised, the sahib is safe," said Naon, wiping from his face the sweat caused by his fears for my safety, and with a warmth that greatly delighted me, as it showed that even a half-caste Burman and Portuguese—and their sincerity is never questioned by Europeans—could be brought to feel something like affection for one with whom he had passed through many dangerous adventures. Resolving to be careful in my choice of dress, especially that it should contain no red, when next I had the honor of a close audience with a buffalo, I leaped into the cart, and before sundown we were within the boundary of the Carian village.

This village—it is an act of exaggerated politeness to use the term to a collection of mere pigeon-houses —was situated in the midst of grazing grounds, rice, and other vegetable fields. In shape it was square, the four sides being composed of some fifty barns, each of which was stuck upon poles twelve feet from the ground, the purpose of this elevation being as well to protect the inmates from the ravages caused by the periodical deluge-like rains, as from the attacks or prowling tigers, and even wild elephants, with which the woods at a short distance abound, and which animals, attracted by the rice and vegetable grounds, frequently attack the villages of Pegu.

The houses themselves are of the most miserable description, the sides being of mats, the bamboo tops covered with thatch, and the only means of ascent

and descent being by deeply-notched sticks, or rough ladders, which at night are drawn up to prevent the visits of beasts or thieves. In the quadrangle formed by the four sides, are stakes to which the buffaloes, when driven home of an evening, are fastened by cords; while the under parts of the houses—between the poles or supports—form the only places of refuge for the poultry, pigs, and dogs, which, together with the buffaloes, keep up a nocturnal concert, not by any means pleasing to musical ears, but which becomes discord beyond all description when the brutes happen to be visited during the night by one of the half-famished tigers, who regard these villages as their especial preserves of both animals and men.

The Carians are an extraordinary race, at least, to be found living beneath the rule and amidst so warlike a people as the Burmese; for, although worshippers of Guadama—that is, as far as they worship at all—they are quakers in principles. More robust in form, and of whiter complexion than their masters, the Burmese, they are at the same time a simple, innocent people, mild and hospitable to strangers; like the patriarchs of old, they are without other laws than those of custom and tradition; entertain a hatred for cities; never intermarry with other races; lead a purely pastoral life, which they pursue with unremitting industry; and, moreover, believe in universal peace, which, as you may imagine, keeps them in a state of slavish submission. Their language is radically the same as the Burman, though the very different dialect they speak renders it difficult even

for a good Burmese scholar to understand. I have said they worship Guadama, the god of the Burmans; it is, however, with little fervor, for they do not even comprehend his doctrine, or indeed, any other. Moreover, they seem to inherit a stupid and determined belief that it was pre-ordained that religious knowledge should for ever be denied them; for, although sufficiently enlightened to know and admit their ignorance, they assign as the reason, "That God once wrote his laws and commands on the skin of a buffalo, and called upon all nations of the earth to come and take a copy—a summons which all obeyed except the Carianers, who, being occupied in the business of husbandry, had not leisure, and that in consequence of that neglect they have remained in a state of ignorance, without any other cares than those in connection with their pastoral employment."

Hospitable as I know these simple people to be, even to ordinary strangers, I was surprised at the reception we met with at the hands of the family (some seven men, women, and children) of our two guides; their delight seemed to have no bounds—the men offered us their food, one even a favorite buffalo; the women took gold ornaments from their ears, and cowrie shells from their necks to lay them at my feet; they danced, they capered, they sang, that is, after their fashion; but what was more agreeable, so great was their delight, that they roasted a fine buck for our supper. This was a rare event, for the little religion they possess forbids the killing of animals for food; and all this because—well, what I could dis-

cover—because the sahib had been the means of bringing to condign punishment the crocodile which had made a meal of the beloved eldest son of the family. Thus was I made a hero, as many others, I believe, have arrived at the same honor, by mere accident—in fact, by running away—which, by the way, reminds me that at Marathon House, Fulham, the boys had an axiom that "two mulls are as good as a spin."

Now, whether from the consciousness that these honors were undeserved, or from great fatigue, I know not, but probably the latter, my brain grew dizzy, my eyes became dim,—in fact, I wanted a good sleep; our hosts perceiving this, one of them instantly conducted us to the other division or half the house, which, although the whole family would have to be huddled together in the other like a litter of pigs, they hospitably and generously devoted to our sole use.

This apartment, although without a vestige of furniture, a hole in the roof, which seemed for the double purposes of window and chimney, and nothing but the rough unplaned boards upon which to rest our tired limbs, was the best bed-room of the family and of which, after loading the rifle, having the ladder drawn up, and the house-door closed, we showed our best appreciation by falling fast asleep, and probably joining in the concert of grunting, barking, lowing, squeaking of the animals beneath our heads.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHITE ANTS CAUSE NAON TO MEET WITH A DISASTER.

Although, defiantly of the hard boards which formed my bed, I soon sank into a deep sleep, about daybreak I was startled by a crash and a great uproar of horses' hoofs, the barking of dogs, and the fluttering and flapping of wings; and, between asleep and awake, I cried aloud—

"Up, Naon, the tigers are upon us."

But Naon did not answer. He sleeps soundly, and I must awaken him, I muttered; so creeping through the darkness toward him with one hand feeling about me, to my surprise I could find no Naon; but crawling further upon my knees and hands, imagine my astonishment when the latter suddenly went through the floor, and I found myself flat upon my breast, with my head hanging over a hole. Resting thus for a moment in helpless astonishment, I heard the half-caste exclaiming—

"Sahib Oliver, help—help! or Naon will become the food of beasts;" then a chorus of grunts and barks.

"Great Heaven! some of the flooring must have given way," I exclaimed; and I crawled backward to seize my rifle, which, to my shame, I admit I had

placed against the door, doubtful of the honesty of the good-natured Carians; but before I could seize the weapon, a gleam, a glare of light shot upward through the hole; and a sight presented itself which, but for its seriousness, would have made me laugh heartily.

There, with a torch in his hand, stood our senior guide, who, aroused by the cries, had come to the rescue of the poor fellow, who, while asleep, had fallen through the flooring among dogs, poultry, and pigs; and it was the latter animals chiefly who, both by voice and action, had been vehemently objecting to Naon's so rudely forcing himself upon their society.

"Here, catch hold, Naon," I said, handing down the rifle, intending to drop through the hole to his assistance; but the Carian, first placing his finger upon his lips to betoken silence, forestalled me by "making a back," by which Naon at once re-ascended into the chamber from whence he had made so inglorious a descent.

"The Lord of heaven be thanked it is no worse," said Naon, philosophically, holding the torch (which the Carian had given him) near the impression his recumbent body had made in the flooring.

"No, worse," I repeated, laughing.

"It might have been worse, sahib; for, awakened by the barking of the dogs and trampling of horses' feet, I crawled, as I thought, toward the door; instead, however, I went in the opposite direction, when, think of my horror at finding the floor crack

crash, and my father's son nearly consigned to the most disgraceful of all deaths, that of being buried in the stomachs of swine."

"But the cause of the uproar? Are the tigers upon us?" I said, instinctively.

"Worse, sahib; the messengers of the General Maha Silwa, who is on his march to Rangoon, have arrived with orders for houses to be built for him and his officers, by to-morrow evening."

"Then we will quit the village, for, not to avoid falling into the hands of that fierce inhuman form would be madness," said I.

"But sahib, the roads are occupied."

"Nevertheless, we must *not* be taken, Naon."

"Let the sahib remain in this hut till the Maha has passed."

"But these Carians, can we trust them? for they know that I am one of those whose countrymen are now invading their nation."

"The sahib may trust the Carians, for great is their hatred to the Maha, who, although by the law he dares not seize them for soldiers, as he may other tribes, will plunder them of their food and cattle."

"But the Maha cannot reach here so soon."

"Such is his message, sahib, and the Carians regard it with the certainty of fate."

"Then he must take up his lodging in the old palace we passed near the village."

"Such would not be possible, sahib, for the palace was built for the Engy Tikien" (heir to the throne).

"Surely it is, for the Maha is not too big, nor the

palace too small; moreover, it is untenanted, except by the white ants," I said, laughing.

"Nevertheless it is not possible, for, although it is shameful and disgraceful for a Burman to rest but a single day in a house wanting in the size and decorations due to his rank, it is a crime punishable with instant death for a praw (lord), however exalted he may be, to enter a house erected for a personage but a single step above him in station."

"Truly, I have heard of this foolish custom." But, ere I could say more, the head of the family, our senior guide, came, and, having conducted us into the other division of the house, at once corroborated all Naon had said; adding, that as the Maha's messengers had delivered their orders and proceeded on their way to Rangoon, he would find us a hiding-place; a kindness I thought more than a return for the trifling favor I had conferred upon them by involuntarily entrapping to his death the crocodile which had destroyed their relation.

Not so, however, these good-natured people; for not only did they procure for us the best viands to be found in their village, but, as an especial mark of their gratitude, put before me a fruit the purchase of which must have straitened their not too plentiful means.

This fruit, which, in all probability, you have never heard of, is one of the luxuries of Burmese royalty, and affords an apt illustration of the old adage "That what is one man's meat, is another man's poison." It is named the durian, and is about the size of a cocoa-

nut, green, and covered with sharp short points The outer prickly pod is divided into four or five lobes, in each of which are three or four smooth brown stones, enveloped in a stringy custardy pulp, which is the eatable portion, there being but little fruit for so great a show. Now, the scent of this fruit is so frightful and revolting that, even at the risk of seriously offending these simple people, I was compelled to beg of them to take it out of the house; which, after the matter had been explained by Naon, they did with considerable wonderment and chagrin. Yet, so adaptable is the human palate, that, although at first to me its odor was offensive, and its taste revolting, in the course of time, with me, as with most persons who lived in the East, by mere force of habit, this durian became a favorite fruit.

But you are curious to know the cause of Naon's queer adventure. Well, it was neither more or less than, first, carelessness on the part of the Carian family, who had neglected the only preventive of such an accident,—namely, saturating the timbers of their house with petroleum, or earth-oil; and, secondly, that minor scourge of the East, termed by naturalists termites, but popularly known by the name of the white ant.

That Naon's misadventure had been caused by an insect which is less than a quarter of an inch in length, I could not have believed, notwithstanding the protestation of our host, but for a comical incident, which happened by way of proof. The host, evidently discerning signs of unbelief in my coun-

tenance, arose from the floor, upon which we were all sitting at our meal, saying—

"The sahib shall see white ant very terrible, specially to poor peasants;" and, having left us for a short time, returned with a log of wood some ten feet in length, and four feet in diameter; indeed, so large, that I was surprised at the ease with which he carried it. Placing this upon the floor he said, "See, sahib, that piece of tree is large, but white ant could eat it all up."

"Truly, if very numerous, with great appetites, and a few months to do it in," said I.

"The Carian's words are good, sahib; the white ants would eat their way through, from one end to the other, in twenty-four hours," said Naon, gravely.

This assertion was too much for my risible faculties. "That log!" I said. "Why, I should as soon believe that my own slight weight would flatten it into a board."

"Perhaps it would, sahib," said Naon.

Laughing at Naon's assertion I jumped upon the wood. Its surface did not resist my weight, and I fell to the ground, or rather in the middle of the log, where I laid at full length, as if in a canoe without ends, to the alarm of the peasants, and the laughter of Naon, who had sought by way of experiment, to convince me of the destructive powers of the white ants.

For the instant I felt provoked; but keeping my temper, I said—

"You are right, Naon, I no longer dispute the appetites of these little insects. Yet," I added, "although this thick log has been eaten through, it must have taken them a long time."

"It is not so, noble colar; that log was one of the extra supports of this house, and cut from the forest less than a moon since, and had we not omitted to cover it with earth oil, the only preventive against these insects, it would have been solid now."

"Is it possible, then, that all the supports of this house are in the same state?" said I, expecting that, like Naon, we should have to pass through another adventure with the pigs.

"Not so, sahib; the others are saturated with the oil; but this, which the Nats, unfortunately, caused to be placed beneath the resting place of the noble colar's worthy attendant, was awaiting the coming of the next supply from the wells of Yenang-young," replied our host.

I afterward found that such accidents were not by any means unfrequent; and that so secretly do these insects effect their lodgement, that the peasantry, and even the higher classes, who foolishly neglect the use of the earth-oil, do not discover their proximity until they have effected almost irreparable damage to their houses.

Many curious stories are told of the destructive power of these little insects. Old Kæmpfer says, "The white ant is a small slender worm, perfectly white, like snow. They live together in commonalty, as our European ants do: from whom they do not much

differ in shape and bigness. Their head and breast are of a brownish dark color, and hard to the touch. The Japanese call them doo-toos (piercers); an epithet they well deserve, for they pierce and perforate whatever they meet with, stones and ore only excepted; and when once they get into a merchant's warehouse, they are able within a very short compass of time to ruin and destroy his best goods. Our common European ants are their mortal enemies; and whatever place the one sort takes possession of, the others must necessarily quit. They are no more able than moles to support the open air, and whenever they go out upon an expedition, they defend themselves by building arches or trenches along their line of march, which they know how to tie fast to the ground. These arches are much of the same substance with that of wasp's nests.

"During my stay at Coylang a Dutch fort on the coast of Malabar," Kæmpfer adds, "I had an apartment assigned to me in the governor's house. One night I did not go to bed till midnight. The next morning, when I arose, I took notice of the marks of such arches upon my table, which were about the bigness of my little finger; and upon a more accurate inspection, I found that these animals had pierced a passage of that thickness up one foot of the table, then across (though, as good luck would have it, without any damage done to the paper), and so down through the middle of the foot into the floor; and all this was performed within a few hours' time."

That the white ant has an especial fondness for

wood I had many proofs in the forests, where the number of trees to be found injured by them is surprising; for in the woods they do not conceal their nests, but boldly build them either near the root or high upward; and frequently trees which appear to be robust, and of noble size, upon pressure, prove to be mere bark, the sap and wood beneath being eaten away, as had been my experimental log.

Fond, however, as they are of wood, white ants are neither Epicureans or squeamish in their choice of the particular substance upon which they work, as an amusing anecdote told by a recent traveler will testify. While the French occupied the Mauritius, the Minister of Marine in Paris, on examining the annual reports forwarded to him from the colony, observed that year after year the destruction of a considerable portion of the iron, as well as other stores, was ascribed to the white ant. Now, although in those days French ministers were not over severe in their scrutinies of the expenditure of the public moneys, or the waste of public stores, they yet required some decent excuse. The idea, however, of these small insects being capable of destroying iron bolts, bars, and other implements so tickled his fancy, that in the next shipment of stores to the colony, the minister humorously included a box of files, with instructions that they were to be employed in filing the teeth of these obnoxious foes. In this instance, however, the minister's humor was misplaced, for the slimy substance which they emit, and with which their nests and covered ways are formed, is of so corrosive

a nature, that even iron yields to its influence, and rusts to decay.

Having given you incidents illustrative only of the mischievous side of their character, I must, even at the risk of tediousness, give you also a notion of the ingenuity, if not genius, of these little animals, of which there are several species, one of which lives in communities and kingdoms, beneath a building of earth of conical shape, from ten to twelve feet high, under a regular form of government, and the rule of a limited monarchy.

Like the English constitution, the community is divided into three estates—king, lords, and commons; or, as naturalists term them—laborers, soldiers, and perfect insects—the first being the workers, the second fighters, or protectors of the workers, and the king or queen; the third being those only who are capable of being elected king or queen, the test of that capacity being their capability of continuing their species by laying eggs, and being provided with wings, which nature very wisely and wonderfully gives to them alone, and that only, as I shall show you, for a very short time. It is also curious and interesting to know that nature has adapted the bodies of each of these separate classes in each kingdom—which, remember, are all of the same parents—namely, the ruling king and queen, to its separate function, for the laborer is of brownish color, less than one-fourth of an inch in length, delicate and slender, with a distinct head, chest, and abdomen, with six legs, and a mouth calculated for gnawing; while the sol-

dier is half an inch long, equal in bulk to fifteen laborers, with jaws shaped like a crab's claw, so that they are incapable of any thing else but piercing or wounding. The royal or propagating class, which is supposed to exhibit the insect in its most perfect state, varies still more, the head, throat, and abdomen being almost totally different in form from the other classes; besides which, they possess four large transparent wings, with which, at the time of emigration, they wend their way in search of a new settlement, and found a new kingdom; curiously, in the winged state, the insect is equal in bulk to thirty laborers, or two soldiers, and has two large eyes placed on each side of the head; whilst in the others they are not easily distinguishable.

You who have only seen the ant-hills of England will scarcely credit that the hills of the insects of which I am telling you rise in height from eight to twelve feet, and are so large and strong, that when about half erected, it is the practice of the wild bulls to stand sentinels upon them whilst the rest of the herd is ruminating below; moreover, so numerous are they in some parts, that it is scarcely possible to stand upon any cleared and open space where one of these buildings is not to be seen within fifty paces, and frequently two or three are to be witnessed almost close to each other; indeed, in Senegal, the traveler Adanson tells us, their number, magnitude, and closeness of situation make them appear like the villages of the natives.

The interior, however, of one of these hills is sin

gularly interesting, and suggests the comical idea that man, the lord of creation, might have borrowed some of his usages from even the little ant. First, as royalty is the notion in which they are all born, their primary object is to secure the comfort and dignity of the king and queen; consequently the royal chamber is placed as near the centre as possible, is the shape of a very small egg at first, but increased in size accordingly as the royal family increase, beautifully arched, and furnished with doors which are so small that only the laborers and soldiers can go in and out; while king and queen, who are of larger size, like many other sovereigns, pay for their dignity by exclusion from their subjects.

On all sides of the royal chamber are apartments, where the laborers and soldiers wait to guard and serve their king and queen, who are also their common parents. These apartments extend a foot or more round the royal chamber. Then commence the nurseries, wherein the little snow-white princes and princesses, both in and out of eggshells, are brought up; and the magazines, which are always kept well provided with provisions, such as gums and the inspissated juices of plants. These galleries and chambers are continued one above the other to within two-thirds of the height of the interior of the hill, leaving an open area in the middle under the dome, like the nave of a cathedral. The dome is apparently supported by four large gothic arches, which suggests to my mind that that grand style of architecture must not only be the purest and most natural but

that the little ants must have a very grand nature to have conceived such a style, for, with all their cleverness, I cannot believe that ever a genius existed among them capable of visiting and copying from the old gothic priests.

There are also great subterranean galleries, and passages lined with thick clay, which ascend outwardly in a spiral manner. There are also sloping descents, reaching a depth, perpendicularly, of three or four feet, from which they procure the clay, which, being worked in the mouths of these insects, becomes almost as hard as stone. It is by these subterranean passages, and their talent for undermining, their cities spread to such a vast extent, that if all the nests are destroyed within one hundred yards of a human dwelling the ant inhabitants of hills at a comparatively vast distance will, nevertheless, carry on their subterranean galleries, and invade the same dwelling by sap and mine till they have effected great mischief.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FIGHT WITH A TIGER.

While our kind hosts were considering by what means they could hide us from this terrible Maha Silwa, whose promised coming seemed to have frightened the whole village out of its senses, a young man ran up the ladder and threw himself at their feet.

"Guadama be praised, the good Nats be thanked, our Mikee has escaped the Praw Silwa," exclaimed the parents and son simultaneously.

"The Maha, my father, with a mighty army is now on the war-path to sweep the rebels from the land of the Golden Foot," was the reply; "but these colars ——,"he added, glancing suspiciously at Naon and me.

"We are ungrateful my son," said the father, who in his joy at his son's return, which was evidently unexpected, had for the moment forgotten us; adding, "Thy father and his sons are the slaves of this noble colar till we have redeemed ourselves by paying the debt we owe him."

"Slaves, my father! Have we escaped the bondage of the tiger Burman to become the slaves of the colar" (foreigner or stranger), said Mikee.

"My son, the praw colar, and his noble attendant, saved thy father and brother from the monster who

destroyed our beloved relative," said the mother; then telling, with words of praise I cannot repeat, the whole story of the crocodile.

This was enough; the young man's suspicions vanished, and falling upon the floor before me, he vowed to be my slave till he had paid the debt he considered owing by his family. When, however, to remove some of the weight from his conscience, I told him that I considered the hospitality already afforded by his parents a sufficient return for the *killing* of a mere crocodile, he leaped upon his feet, danced, screamed—indeed, as I then thought, went straightway mad. Stopping, however, for an instant, and turning his eyes full upon me, he cried—

"*Kill*—dead! *is* it dead?" for his parents had purposely omitted the climax of the adventure.

"Dead, truly it is, and eaten by the hunters by this time," said I; and this strange being having again danced and screamed for joy, threw himself upon his knees, and exclaimed fervently—

"Then will the slave of the praw colar (lord stranger) never remove his feet from the hunting-grounds till by one great service he has fully proved his gratitude to his master!"

I did not, however, at the time, place great faith in this promise; for I had become so accustomed to eastern hyperbole, and so well understood the ungrateful natures of the people of Burma, that, to use a common phrase, it passed in at one ear and out of the other. What it *did* mean, however, you will discover in proper time, for the peasant kept his word.

"But the Maha Silwa! we shall fall into his hands, sahib," said Naon, trembling as he spoke.

"Is there no path through the woods known to the hunter, by which we may journey, and yet avoid the soldiers of the Maha?" I asked.

"It would be as easy to tread the bed of the Irrawaddy without meeting a crocodile, O noble colar; for, although the main body of the army is with the Maha, the remainder are spread over the country and through the paths and jungles," replied Mikee.

"Then, truly we must remain within this house till the danger is over," said I.

"It is not possible, O noble colar; for, although the body of the poor Carian is safe from being taken to swell the armies of the Burman, no Burman chief passes through a village without plundering every house of its cattle and food," said Mikee, thoughtfully.

"Then we must take our chance in the woods; Mikee has vowed himself the slave of the colar, will he be his guide?" said I.

"Mikee dares not meet the soldiers of the Maha, from whom he has so narrowly escaped; for, alas! he is no longer a peaceful Carian," said the father.

"Then you have deceived me by your boasts, Mikee," I said, angrily.

"It is not so; the slave will serve his master with his life, for he owes him a debt which he has sworn to repay," was the reply; but having pondered awhile, he added—

"The villagers are now preparing to hunt the

deer; let the praw (lord) and his noble attendant join in the hunt, for among the crowd they may escape notice, even should they fall in with the soldiers. Then, when the sun sinks, we may leave the hunters, and make our way to Paree, where Mikee has a boat, in which the colars may safely journey to Yenang-young as oil-carriers, which is their servant's occupation."

"A capital scheme," said I, not a little pleased; whereupon the oil-carrier left the house to make the necessary preparations for the journey; but so curious had I become to learn something of this young man's previous history that, addressing the parents, I said—

"But how is this? Can Mikee be thy son, and yet not a Carian, for the lamb cannot change its nature?"

"Is it possible for Guadama even to graft the nature of the tiger upon that of the lamb," said our host, piously, adding—

"Thus, from his birth has Mikee been different from his relations; scorning their peaceful occupations, he has ever been restless to burst aside the bonds of slavery of his tribe. Alas! the opportunity has never been granted, for the poor Carian is not permitted to serve in the armies or the hunting-fields of the Golden Foot. This restlessness became increased some many moons since by a learned sage, who, while resting at this village, prophesied that there was glory in store for Mikee and his family, for the boy would some day light upon a dis

covery that would so gain him the favor of the Golden Foot that his majesty should bestow upon him wealth, lands, and the tslao (string of nobility). This prophecy preyed upon his mind, till he dreamed that while walking in a forest he suddenly fell upon the hiding place of a lord White Elephant, and believing that to be the only discovery that would gain him the favor of the Golden Foot and the strings of nobility, he has since then known rest neither by night nor day; for truly, though so great a discovery is rare, and a benevolence from Guadama, it is yet possible."

"Truly a Carian may not be admitted among the king's elephant hunters, who are a separate tribe?" said Naon.

"This is our misery, and thus we are ever fearing for his safety, O noble colar; for, determined to be a mighty hunter, Mikee has established himself as a carrier of oil and fish between this village and Yenang-young."

"But how can that make him an elephant hunter?" said I.

"By carrying oil he obtains money, and out of every three moon's journey he spends one in the forests with his rifle, spear, and dah (hatchet), believing that gods are good to the vigilant, and that the finding of a lord White Elephant would be his excuse to the Golden Foot for breaking the laws."

"But, should he be fortunate enough to find the animal, he will not be able to catch it without other aid."

"The noble colar's words are wise; but being the discoverer of the herd among which it is taken, Mikee would be held the chief of the hunters, and rewarded as the favored of Guadama."

At that moment Mikee returned.

"The hunters are prepared to start; the noble colars must hasten," said he.

Whereupon, by the aid of the family, Naon and myself changed our dresses for others still more scanty, namely, that of Burmese peasants: a loose open jacket, equally loose short breeches, a linen handkerchief, tightly bound around our brows, and our hair tightly drawn up from the back into a large round ball. At a great risk, however, I would preserve the light shoes I then had upon my feet, fearing to trust my bare soles upon the earth. The most disagreeable, but the most important portion of the transformation I had to undergo, was the smearing over of my face, hands, legs, and arms with a light mahogany-colored preparation, so that at a distance—and it was not my intention to approach sufficiently near the enemy for personal inspection—I should pass muster among the swarthy-skinned natives of the village, from whom I had no fear, as they all most cordially agreed in hating the Maha and his soldiers, for whom they were compelled to leave their occupations and provide food.

Thus attired, and equipped after the Burman fashion with sword and shield, also my good rifle, which I would upon no account have left behind, Naon, Mikee, and myself sallied forth to join the deer

hunters, who were assembled outside the palisades of the village.

The order of march, although tumultuous and noisy, and attended with as much bravado and boasting as if it had been a great army on its way to conquest, instead of a body of Asiatic quakers, was accompanied by much good nature. The party consisted of fifty; that was about one half the population; the other half remained behind for the completion of the mansion and huts in readiness for the Maha and his officers, which, like Aladdin's palace, were to be erected in a few hours.

The leader of the party was Mikee, for whom, both as a traveler and hunter, the mob seemed to have great veneration. Across the small plain which skirted the village, the whole party marched in great disorder; approaching, however, the narrow path of the jungle, a single line was formed, headed by Mikee, Naon, and myself, and closed by a number of men carrying bamboo sticks.

As we passed through the thick jungle, several of the party continued to make a great noise with tom-toms, for the purpose of frightening the tigers with which it abounded; but great as was the din created by the voices of the men, and the sound of the tom-toms, one terrific scream was heard above all. There was a rush forward so suddenly that I fell to the ground, and was stumbled over by my immediate followers. Before I could scramble to my feet again, I heard a loud shriek, a groan, then a rush through the tall reeds, and a terrible growl.

"The tiger! the tiger!" was the cry on all sides.

"Lord of heaven! she has taken a man with her," said Naon.

"Steady," said Mikee, softly, his great eyeballs scarcely less glaring than that of the tiger; adding, as he crouched upon his knees and hands, "the devil shall die, our friend shall be revenged."

"Stay, man, surely you would not venture, without a rifle, to attack the beast," said I.

"Mikee is a great hunter; he will revenge his friend," he said, sternly; adding, "the noble colar has fought with a more terrible enemy, therefore is not like the Carians, in fear. Let him follow softly with his rifle."

"I will. It will cover you," said I, making up my mind at once to the course I intended to follow.

"Then Mikee, upon knees and hands, with his sword beneath his arm, and his shield moved upward upon his shoulder, crawled forward; fortunately the jungle here had been beaten down; probably it was a tiger track.

"Softly, and we shall come upon the brute;" and Mikee moved forward. Then we heard a suppressed growl, by which we knew the savage animal had stopped to devour, or at least to play with its prey. A little further on, through an opening, we saw a scene that lives in my eyes at this moment.

The bleeding corpse of the poor Carian, which the tiger had carried upon his back, lay extended upon the grass, the beast either not caring for, or believing itself safe from pursuit; for it was an old tigress,

who had been taught by experience with what impunity she might steal one man from a party without being followed by his comrades, that stood with one paw upon the breast, and, as if it heard or scented us, with its head turned in the direction of our approach.

It was a terrible moment; I leveled my rifle over Mikee's shoulder, at the same time saying—

"I have a good sight, I will fire."

"No; hush," he replied; and we waited at least three minutes, which were lengthened by terrible anxiety as I gazed at the flaming eyeballs of the brute.

Our silence at length threw the beast off its guard: she was now about to commence her fearful repast. Like a cat with a mouse, she walked around the body, patting it with her paws, as if to make it move; then, lashing her tail to and fro, and keeping up a low growl, she turned her head from us. Mikee's opportunity had arrived; so, as he fixed his shield upon his left arm and grasped his sword firmly, he said—

"Should I miss her, take time for aim, and fire, not before," and instantly leaped through the opening. Unfortunately, his foot slipped—he fell upon his back. The tigress quitted her prey, and in a second had her claw upon his breast. That blow from the claw alone would have given him his death wound, had he not either instinctively, or with wonderful presence of mind, so placed his shield that it caught and so rendered harmless the beast's paw.

Now my opportunity had arrived for proving the

value of my rifle, and a bullet pierced her neck. It would not, however, have served Mikee; for, instead of killing, it but directed her rage to her new enemy, myself, toward whom she glanced fiercely, and, removing her paw from Mikee, prepared to spring; but as she did so Mikee's sword passed into her heart, and thief and assassin as she was, she rolled over dead.

"Bravo, Mikee! thou art indeed a mighty hunter," said I.

"Mikee deserves no praise, since but for the noble colar's rifle he would have been defeated. A great hunter relies upon his own arm alone," said he; adding, "our brother is revenged, and the murderer will do to feed the soldiers of the Maha."

Then giving, not a whistle—for, curious as it may appear, no native of Pegu or Burma *can* whistle—but a low shriek, the deer hunters burst through the jungle, and when, after many exclamations of grief at the sight of the dead body of their friend, and loud praises of both Mikee and myself as heroes, a small party carried the body of the dead man back to the village. We then proceeded in search of a herd of deer, which we discovered at a distance of about a mile further onward. The noble animals were grazing, or ruminating, among some tall grass, while two of their number (apparently the oldest and most experienced) stood as sentries near the opening of the jungle.

As, however, the operations resemble, both in spirit and cowardice, the common *battue* of England, when

a party of sportsmen, attended by servants holding loaded pieces, and others who beat down the poor frightened and over-fed birds, till they fall in wholesale slaughter, from the shot of *blazé* gentlemen who find a pleasure in the morbid love of destruction without having to encounter that personal danger and fatigue which gives the true salt to hunting of any kind, I shall merly describe the process.

First, at a signal from Mikee, the men extended themselves in a long curved line, gradually bending the curve till they had formed a circle, in the midst of which the deer grazed: the first movement which contracted the circle alarmed the animals, who, perceiving themselves enclosed on all sides, kept up a bleating noise, at the same time huddled themselves together. One, now and then, more courageoes than the rest, or in fear for its mate, would attack the party nearest with its horns, only, however, to become the first victim. Then the circle, becoming more and more contracted, the party with the bamboo sticks constructed a fence, which, being completed, the whole party entered, and cut down deer after deer till they were all destroyed.

Nothing could have reconciled me to this wholesale slaughter but the fact that they were necessary for human food; shocked, however, as I was, I was not prepared to find a sympathetic feeling in a half-civilized Burman. It was so, however; for asking Mikee why he did not join in the sport, he said—

"The sword of Mikee is not for the graceful and harmless antelope, but for the ruthless tiger,

who is the enemy of man;" adding, with flashing eyes, "Mikee seeks to become a mighty conqueror of the lords of the woods, to offer life for life, to emulate the glories of the mighty Geily Khan, his ancestor."

"Geily Khan? How is it possible he could have been thy ancestor, for truly it is a Mogul name and title, while thou art a Carian," said I, with surprise.

"Mikee is a Carian, his ancestors were taken prisoners in war by the Burmans, and rather than fight in their armies became slave Carians. Nevertheless, the blood of Geily is in the veins, and the spirit of Geily is in the heart of Mikee," the hunter replied; adding, as we sat upon the plain to partake of a meal prepared by one of the party, "Would the noble colar listen to the story of Geily Khan?"

"I should indeed like to hear the history of this wonderful man," I replied; and Mikee began.

CHAPTER XV.

A WILD BEAST COMBAT; WE SEEK SHELTER FROM THE MONSOON.

It was the birthday of the mighty Mogul, Seacl Coram; the inhabitants of the empire were tumultuous to give him diversion and do him honor. Attended by his great lords, he had been to the palace of the author of his being, the empress mother, to pay his respects and offer presents. After dinner he put on his most gorgeous robes, covered with gold and precious stones. Thus glittering, and attended by his lords in their richest dresses, he had entered a tent, in the centre of which were a pair of golden scales, in which he weighed himself by bags of silver, gold, precious stones, silk stuffs, linen cloth, pepper, cloves, nutmegs, wheat, pulse, and herbs, and having, by reference to the account kept of the previous year's weighing, found that he had but satisfactorily increased in weight, he seated himself upon his throne of ivory, gold, and diamonds, and caused to be cast amongst his lords curious and costly jewels, wrought in the shape of pistachios and almonds.

The gorgeous throne was erected at one side of the wild-beast court, the arena of which was about to become the scene of a great fight between animals, and also between animals and men, for great was the

love of the Mogul for such diversions, as it brought forth the bravest men of his dominions.

The first fight was between a wild bull and a lion, and the next that of a lion and tiger. As soon as the tiger saw the lion, he went straight toward him, and closing with all his strength, got him down, and the audience shouted, believing the tiger had the victory; but the lion, recovering his position, fastened his teeth in the throat of the tiger, whereupon a great struggle ensued, and continued till fatigue caused both animals to desist, both much hurt, but neither mortally.

Then the chief minister came forth, and proclaimed the Mogul's wish, to see whether there were any among his subjects of sufficient courage to engage any of the beasts with sword and buckler alone; adding, that, if victorious, be he who or what he might, he should not only receive the imperial favor, but the title of khan.

The challenge being accepted by an Indostan, a furious lion was let forth. The beast, seeing his adversary enter the arena, made toward him, and a terrible conflict ensued, till at length, unable to bear the weight of the beast, the man began to let fall his buckler, which the lion endeavored to force from him with his right paw, while with his left he was about seizing his antagonist by the throat; suddenly, however, the Indostan pulled a dagger from his girdle, and thrust it so far into the lion's jaws that he was forced to quit his hold and get away Seeing his advantage, the man followed and slew the beast with his dagger.

Great were the acclamations of the audience at the victory, till the Mogul, ordering silence, said, with an angry smile—

"It must needs be confessed thou art a brave man, and that thou hast fought very valiantly, but did I not forbid thee to engage this beast with any advantage, and appoint the arms to be used? Yet hast thou done contrary to my order, and not overcome my lion as a person of honor, but hast surprised the poor beast with forbidden arms, and so hast killed him as a murderer, and not as a declared enemy?"

Having thus spoken, the mighty Mogul ordered the Indostan to be immediately ripped up, and the body to be set upon an elephant and carried through the city of Delhi as an example to others.

The challenge was again proclaimed, and accepted. The next man was more honorable, but was instantly slain and torn to pieces by the tiger which he encountered. Still this did not deter another from coming, who, although of low stature and miserable countenance, at once fiercely attacked the tiger, which beast, flushed with its previous success, ran at once to meet its antagonist. The man, however, with wonderful presence of mind, and an eye so fixed and firm, that it bespoke him capable of becoming a leader among men, struck off the fore-paws at one blow with his sword, and having thus disabled, speedily dispatched the animal.

Great were the acclamations at this victory, and great was the pleasure of the Great Mogul at finding he had so great a hero in his dominions, and who,

hearing that his name was Geily, sent to him a dress of rich brocade by the hands of a great lord, who, upon presenting it, said—

"Geily, receive this garment from my hands, as an assurance of the favor of our most mighty lord the Great Mogul, who sends it thee as a pledge thereof."

Receiving the garment, and prostrating himself to the earth, as in duty bound, Geily put it to his breast and eyes, and afterward holding it in the air, and having made a short prayer to himself, said aloud—

"My prayers to God are, that the Mogul's glory may be equal to that of Tamerlane, from whom he is descended; may his arms prosper, may his wealth be increased, may he live seven hundred years, and may his house be established for ever."

Then there came to him two eunuchs, who conducted him to the Mogul's chamber. At the entrance whereof two khans took him between them, and so brought him to the Mogul's feet, which Geily kissed; after which, the Mogul said—

"It must be confessed, O Geily *Khan*, that thou hast done a very great and glorious action, I therefore bestow on thee that title and quality, which thou shalt enjoy for ever. I will be thy friend, and thou shalt be my servant."

"Thus, O noble colar," said Mikee, "did one single great action lay the foundation of a great fortune; for Geily, who was not so much as known before, grew famous by his bravery in commanding the armies of the Great Mogul, whose enemies he defeated in every encounter—and that Geily was the ancestor of thy

slave," and Mikee remained pensive for some time, no doubt indulging in many ambitious longings and aspirations.

What would poor Mikee think, if he were alive, now that the last crowned descendant of that mighty Mogul, the King of Delhi, is in slavery, a condemned felon in Rangoon, the chief seaport of Pegu, which kingdom is itself, like the empire of the great house of Tamerlane, a mere dependency of the British Queen,—aye what would he think? Perhaps, as we do, that it is far better that the selfish, cruel, and barbarian grandeur of the Asiatic princes is crushed, and that a rule is being inaugurated which will at the same time render it as impossible in India, as in England, for a single despot, in a selfish whim, to degrade the minister of to-day to the slave of to-morrow, or which is worse, raise with a breath, as perhaps you are aware was done by a late king of Oude, a barber to a position equal with that of the prime vizier himself.

For a time Mikee continued to indulge in his reverie, not heeding the noise made by the deer hunters, who were now hastily retracing their steps. Neither do I know how long it would have lasted, for I could not find it in my heart to disturb him, had it not been for a distant sound that reached his ear, when, startled for a moment, he arose to his feet, and gazed about him; then falling suddenly, he placed his ear to the ground; after which, he said, "Mikee deserves to be a slave, for he forgets his friends when the tigers are upon their track."

"'Tis the sound of the tom-toms, and the war horses and war elephants of the Maha's army," said Naon, trembling, while I must confess myself to having been alarmed.

"The noble colar's attendant lets his limbs shake like a reed in the wind," said Mikee, laughing.

"The slave means to betray us," replied Naon.

"Silence, thou coward!" said I; and, seeing the eyes of the hunter flash with indignation, I added—

"Does Mikee's ears tell him these sounds are from the enemies of the colar?"

"Mikee can never fail. Let the noble colar follow," was the reply, as he led us toward a different opening in the jungle than that from which we had emerged upon the antelopes; adding, as we entered the narrow pathway, "this pathway leads to the forest; once there, we can reach the river, where the noble colar will be safe."

Along that pathway, with our eyes strained, and ears upon the alert for the sound, either of wild beasts or wilder men, we trudged for hours, till we entered a dense forest of noble cocoa and palm trees; indeed, it is from a species of the latter, called the areca, that is procured the celebrated nut, which with the betel-leaf, so many of the Asiatic populations are for ever chewing, and which, whether in emperor, empress, peasant, peasantess, or even the little boys and girls, is ever oozing from the mouth in crimson saliva, and the continued use of which blackens the teeth at so early a period of life. But, as so much has been said about this habit without

giving a description, I must pause to tell you, that the trunk of the areca-palm is straight without branches, like the cocoa, whose leaves it resembles in growth. The fruit, which is about the size of a pullet's egg, like the walnut, has a green covering, which consists of numerous fine filaments, running lengthways from the stalk to the head, under which is contained the fruit or nut, which is, externally, of a brown color, and shaped like a nutmeg at one end, but flat at the other. It is white within, and marbled with purple veins, but has very little taste. The way this nut is taken is by wrapping a piece in a betel-leaf, mixed with lime made of calcined shells; the latter to qualify the bitterness of the betel, which is a plant peculiar, or nearly so to the sea coasts.

It is the constant use of this mixture that causes in Asiatics the continual saliva which renders it necessary for persons of rank to be for ever attended by bearers of the betel-box and spitting-boxes; upon which, disgusting as it must appear to you, the princes and lords of Asia lavish immense sums. In Burma the size, and gold, silver, copper, or wooden material of which they are made, are regulated strictly according to the rank and dignity of the owner; and woe unto him whose ambition leads him to carry, or has carried, a betel-box or spitting-box superior to his station. Some luxurious people use the areca and betel mixed with camphor, aloes-wood, musk, or ambergris, for they believe it strengthens the gums, heart, stomach, and brain. Whether this be true, I will not question; certain, however, it is, that it is a

filthy habit, which blackens, and in time loosens the teeth. Perhaps, however we should not be too severe in reviewing the habits of the Asiatics, while the Anglo-Saxon race still continue to smoke, and what is worse, to chew tobacco.

At length feeling greatly fatigued, I said—

"Can we reach the river before sundown, O Mikee? If not, we had better encamp for the night beneath one of these trees."

"True, sahib, and light a fire around, which will serve both to warm the rice and tea, and protect us from the tigers," said Naon.

"The river is many hours' journey, noble colar, and we must rest till daybreak; there is a cave near at hand; if the noble colar wants strength, let him drink of the suri; it will refresh him."

The advice was good, and quickly followed; for not only was a cocoa-tree at hand, but its fruit at our very feet. This suri is of a grateful taste, and intoxicates like wine. It is sweet when newly extracted, but in a short time becomes more acid. It is from this liquor that a spirit like arrack is distilled.

How, however, we, or rather Mikee, for it was he alone, obtained the spirit, was by making an incision in the bark of the fruit, from which the liquor dropped into the flask which had contained the liqueur belonging to the English officer. This suri, if found earlier in the day than when we obtained it, is even more delicious than the milk of the nut. As it was, although refreshing enough to aid me upon my journey, I still found it rather sour and vinegary. *Apropos*

of vinegar, in order to make it from this spirit, the natives, when they have collected a sufficient quantity in their vessels, put the latter among lime for fifteen days, by which a violent fermentation being excited, much froth thrown up, and a whitish matter subsiling to the bottom, the suri is changed into vinegar.

A kind of sugar is also prepared from the suri by putting into it a sufficient quantity of lime to tinge it of a reddish color, the liquor is then boiled and stirred continually till it is inspissated; whereby a red sugar is produced, which they make white by repeated dissolutions and boilings.

Continuing along the path, now so narrow that we were obliged to walk in single file, *i.e.* one by one, and seeing Mikee, who led the way, creeping as stealthily and softly as a cat about to spring upon its prey, I said—

"Does the hunter fear the tiger?"

"The tigers with two legs—the soldiers of the Maha, for there is a wide path within bow-shot," said he.

"Then why choose this?" I asked, almost angrily.

"There is no other, noble colar; and the cave is near," was the reply.

"May we soon reach it, sahib, or we shall be drowned," interposed Naon, pointing to the heavens, across which black and angry clouds were traveling.

"True, Naon, it is the begining of the monsoon;" it may burst upon us to-night.

"It will," said Mikee, as the wind, which had dur-

ing the whole day been increasing, blew a blast that bent the tall reeds to the earth, and seemed to threaten to tear the huge trees upward from their roots.

In a few minutes we had passed through the path into a vast, open, but swampy plain, covered with tall rank grass—grass so tall that a mounted horseman might have ridden through it without being seen.

"Lord of heaven, sahib, no decent white man can pass through this grass," said Naon, shrugging his shoulders, and shivering by anticipation.

Here I must remark that, like most half-castes, Naon prided himself greatly upon being a white man, and upon every opportunity exhibited his antipathy to the color of his mother, albeit he would have had much difficulty in passing for a European even among the children of his own father's nation—Portugal. Mikee, however, took no other notice of the allusion to his color than by saying—

"Let the *white* man stay to be drowned;" adding, as his eye fell upon an opening in the grass some few yards ahead, "see, noble colar, the tiger cannot forget its lair; Mikee has found the cave;" and leading onward through the opening, we soon reached some rising ground of sandstone formation.

You would call it a hill in this country, for it was at least some thirty or forty feet high, but in a mountainous region like Burma, it is not even worthy of so high-sounding a name.

"Lord of heaven, there's—a cobra!" exclaimed Naon, jumping at least two feet upward from the ground.

"Where?" exclaimed both myself and Mikee at the same moment.

"There!" replied Naon, pallid with alarm, and pointing to a dark object just distinguishable in the low grass.

"Kill it, then," said Mikee, abruptly, but biting his lip to avoid laughing.

Before, however, the words had left his lips, Naon, in his fright, and with his full strength, struck so heavy a blow at the head of the reptile, that his sword shivered in two pieces. He looked dismayed and ashamed. Mikee and myself laughed outright. The dreaded cobra proved to be but the arm of a tree which had been blown down, and upon the prickly shoots of which Naon had trodden, and feeling them enter his skin, had taken them for the fangs of one of those reptiles which had killed his father; the thought of which, doubtlessly, ever haunting him, he had given himself up as lost.

"The white man is no hunter; he should remain in towns," said Mikee; adding immediately, as we came to a cavernous opening in the hill, "This is our resting-place."

The opening was large—large enough to have admitted an elephant. Seeing which, I said—

"This will protect us from the monsoon, should it burst forth during the night. It will not, however, protect us from the tigers who may, if they have not already, seek shelter here."

"Will the noble colar lend Mikee his rifle?" said the hunter; and taking it from my hand, and dis-

charging it into the cave, he added, "see, Mikee is right, there is no tiger there;" adding, as he led the way, "follow."

We did, into the wide opening, which, upon entering, we found served as a kind of vestibule or antechamber to another apartment, which we reached through an aperture about breast high from the ground, and but little more than large enough to admit the body of a man. Small, however, as was the entrance, this inner chamber was at least eight feet square; and from the iron grating in the domed roof, the smoothness of the walls—in which were at least some half-a-dozen small gilt images of the deity Guadama, inlaid in niches—and the level paved flooring, I knew to have been, at some time or other, a human habitation.

"This has been the retreat of some pious hermit," said I.

"A hundred moons since, it was," replied Mikee; adding, "but the holy man was slain by robbers in mistake. Since which time the true believers in Guadama (and thy servant is not of the number) have never dared to venture near the cave, fearing not only that the place where holy blood had been spilt would make them impure, but that they might meet the angry spirit.'

Mikee said no more at that time; but I afterward found he had chosen that place as a retreat wherein he might commune with himself, and from his plans to carry out the darling object of his existence—the discovery of the hiding-place of a White Elephant,

for that he had observed one among a herd in that very forest nothing could dissuade him. Moreover, it was not impossible, for, although as yet I had not seen one of those animals, I knew that they were to be found there.

The wind howled fearfully among the grass and the trees in the distance, piercing into our retreat. Amidst the noises I fancied I could hear the scampering feet and low growls of wild animals, as if in fear of the coming storm.

"The brutes will seek shelter in the outer cave," said I.

"Let us kindle a fire," suggested Naon.

"Agreed," said I, and we retraced our steps carefully; and having collected a sufficient quantity of fuel, placed it in the outer cave.

"But," said I, before we had kindled it into a blaze, "we will take it in turns to watch and keep it alive."

"Let the sahib sleep; Naon will watch," said Naon.

"Mikee will watch," said the hunter; adding, "the noble colars are not hunters, who sleep with their eyes open."

This I agreed to, providing Mikee promised to take half the night only, and then awaken me.

"It is good. When the noble colar awakes, then Mikee will sleep."

"That is fair; but take the rifle, Mikee," said I, placing the piece in his hand.

But when the hunter began to kindle the fire, Naon

whispered: "This is not wise; the sahib may want the weapon."

"Bah, Naon," I replied, greatly annoyed that he should suspect the honesty of one who had served us so well as Mikee, and in whom I placed so much faith.

Then, when we had made our way through the aperture, and stuffed it with our jackets to avoid suffocation from the smoke, we laid down to sleep; no easy matter, by the way, for that night the rainy season commenced in earnest—the south-west monsoon had opened in all its fury. But as you may feel somewhat surprised that a little wind and rain should be capable of disturbing the rest of so experienced a traveler as myself, I must give you a slight notion of what a monsoon really is.

Well, then, the monsoon, which prevails alone in India, and is named from the Malay word *moussin*, which signifies season is a wind which blows one half the year from the south-west to the north-east, and the other half from the north-east to the south-west. The first, being accompanied by rain and wind, is called the rainy season, and commences about the beginning of June by the appearance of vast masses of clouds which arise from the Indian Ocean, but thicken as they approach the land. In a few days the sky assumes a more troubled aspect toward evening; and as on that occasion in the cave, it generally sets in at night; first with violent blasts of wind, under which the stoutest trees have a difficulty in holding their own, and which are but the forerunners of floods of

rain which deluge the earth. Lightning flashes uninterruptedly, at first illuminating the sky, showing the clouds near the horizon; then discovering the distant hills, and leaving them again shrouded in darkness; then in an instant re-appearing in vivid and successive flashes, which exhibit even the nearest objects in all the clearness and distinctness of noonday.

The thunder, in the mean time, continues in loud peals; and when it ceases the rain pours in tremendous volumes. This lasts for several days; the sky then clears, the air becomes soft and pure, the rivers are full and tranquil, and the whole face of the earth, as if by enchantment, appears clothed with thick and luxuriant verdure. The rain after this falls at intervals for about a month; then it increases in violence, and attains its height in July, when it descends thickly and heavily from the heavens.

Then in August the monsoon somewhat diminishes; in September it abates, or is entirely suspended until the end of the month, when it again reappears, and departs, as it came, amidst thunder and lightning and all the turmoil of the tempest. Thus you have the south-west monsoon, or rainy season, to which succeeds the north-east monsoon, or dry season, when the heat caused by this hot wind renders the greater part of India so trying to the health of Europeans.

These monsoons, philosophers tell us, are to be explained by the rarefaction of the air induced by the sun's rays, and consequent rushing in of a colder current from the sea and land; while the mountainous

elevation, or plains of the country, which modify the influence of the solar rays, sufficiently account for their periodical recurrence and local peculiarities.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE ARE SEIZED BY THE ENEMY, BUT RESCUED BY MIKEE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the noise of the raging elements, and the vivid streaks of lightning which at intervals flashed through the grating across our eyes, fatigue speedily hushed us into a sound slumber, a slumber from which, however, I was speedily awakened by Naon, who, trembling in every limb, whispered—

"Awake! sahib, awake! the rascal Carian has betrayed us."

"Tush! you coward; you have been dreaming," said I, rubbing my eyes in no very good humor; and, moreover, indignant that he should be ever ready to suspect the hunter.

"It is no tush, sahib; it is real, it is true; and we should not be sleeping here when in another minute we may be seized and taken to the Maha, to be spread out in the sun like dried fish," he replied indignantly.

"What mean you?" I asked.

"That two of the Maha's soldiers are in the cave."

Instantly rising to my feet, I pulled one of the jackets aside, and, to my dismay, saw two armed men in close converse; but as ready as a drowning man to clutch at a straw, I said—

"They may have not seen us, Naon."

"That is unreasonable; but suppose they have, and are only awaiting till we crawl through the aperture to take us," was the reply.

"Well, if so, there are but two; and surely we are a match for them," I replied, proudly.

"The sahib would not listen to the words of Naon; he gave up his rifle to the Carian; moreover, we are in a trap, at the hole of which they can seize us like rats, if we attempt to get out."

"But Mikee, he is armed with the rifle," said I.

"True, sahib; and so, if he were not a rogue, might have kept them off, or at least have given us the alarm."

"Indeed, I am afraid your suspicions are correct," said I, gloomily.

"The Carian has sold us to these thieves of soldiers," he repeated; and I despaired, for I entertained the same belief.

"Yet, I said, "we must not be taken easily, at least without an attempt to escape."

"Escape; yes, it would be good; but how?" he replied; adding, "but no, it is not possible, the sahib is in dreamland."

"That grating, it may be loose; let us try," said I, and in an instant I was upon Naon's shoulders, endeavoring to move the iron bars.

"Hasten, sahib, the rogues are moving," said Naon; and as he spoke, a fierce-looking Burman soldier thrust a musket through the aperture, saying—

"Let the colar dogs attempt to escape, and they die."

"Lord of heaven, it is of no use now," cried Naon, trembling so much that I was compelled to descend from his shoulders; indeed, if I had not, I believe the Burman would have brought me down with a bullet.

"Will the colar dogs come out? or will they die where they are?" asked the savage, with a demoniacal grin.

"Come and fetch us, thou rogue," I said, foolishly; for to provoke the brute was sheer madness.

"Let the brave warrior have patience, and we will come," said Naon, suiting the action to the word, and making his way through the hole, crying as he went—

"Follow, sahib, or he will fire;" and trusting that, as there were apparently but two of them, some opportunity of escape might soon occur, I complied. The instant, however, we reached the other side, we were seized, and our arms bound behind.

"The words of the Carian dog were good; this is the colar rebel for whose head the Maha will give reward," said the soldier, whose face we had not hitherto seen; but whom, to my chagrin, I now recognized to be the soldier who had accompanied me from the pagoda, and by whose words I now discovered that, instead of acting to me as a mere guide, he had been instructed by the treacherous officer of the Shoe Dagon to deliver me over to the first party of troops he might meet.

"Thou rascal!" said I "did not the sahib Johnson pay the rogue of a pagoda officer a large weight of silver for my release?"

"The young colar prayed that he might be permitted to visit the Golden City," said the soldier.

"I did, and thou wert ordered to guide me on the road," said I.

"The young colar shall go now," said he; adding, "but this time he must not play his servant so foul a trick."

Then Naon and I were taken outside the cave, where we saw two horses saddled, upon one of which we were placed, tied back to back; no very pleasant position either, especially as our feet were secured by ropes beneath the animal, so that, had it fallen, we must inevitably have broken our legs.

Whether intended as such or not, it was kind of them to give us this horse, for it rendered it necessary that they should have but the one between them; and thus, one sitting behind the other, they traveled leading our horse by a cord, which being not only attached to the animal, but to the ropes which bound us together, made it impossible for us to disconnect ourselves without their knowledge.

It was some consolation, however, to find that we were traveling in a contrary direction from the village; and moreover, in the direction we should have taken had we been permitted to have continued our journey without their company.

Having secured us, as they imagined, beyond all possibility of escape, our captors rode onward scarcely deigning to turn a glance toward their prisoners. When, however, they began to converse together, I learned that they belonged to the army of the

Maha Silwa, who, having changed his mind, or rather his plans, in which were included his call at the Carian village, had dispatched these men to the latter place with orders that the supply of provisions should be sent on to him to the town of Mopee; to which place, notwithstanding the soldier's assertion that he intended taking us to the capitol, I feared we were proceeding.

Then they conversed of a battle that had been fought near Rangoon, in which the English had been victorious, although the British fleet had nearly been destroyed by the Burmese fire-rafts; ingenious contrivances of bamboos, firmly wrought together in rows, and having between every two or three, a line of large earthen jars, filled with petroleum, or earth-oil and cotton, which, with other inflammable ingredients, distributed in different parts, when lighted, give forth a fierce and almost unextinguishable body of flame.

"Many of the fire-rafts," says Major Snodgrass, who was engaged in that very battle, "were considerably more than a hundred feet in length, and were divided into many pieces, attached to each other by means of long hinges, so arranged that when they caught upon the cable or bow of any ships, the force of the current should carry the ends of the raft completely round her, and envelope her in flames from the deck to her main-topmast-head, with scarcely a possibility of extricating herself from the devouring element."

Our gallant British tars, however, were not suffi

ciently asleep to require any such means of awakening them; for when the Burmans launched these dreadful engines into the stream with the first of the ebb-tide, in the hope of driving the vessels from their stations off the place, and they were followed up by war-boats, ready to take advantage of the confusion which might ensue, should any of them be set on fire, their skill and their bravery proved more than a match for the numbers and cunning of the Burmans; and with a coolness characteristic of British seamen, they entered their boats, and grappling the flaming rafts, quietly towed some past the shipping, and ran the other's ashore upon the bank among the enemy's buildings.

Then, in the midst of their conversation, our captors would every now and then express their wonderment at the invincibility of the English, whom they believed to be devils, not only because of their bravery, but because they carried magicians with them who rendered it quite useless on the part of the Burmans to knock off the heads, arms, or legs of the British soldiers, for no sooner were they off, than these same magicians would instantly replace them.

As you must divine, these magicians were the English surgeons, members of a profession of which the Burmese know so little that their wounded and maimed are left to die; or, if they recover, are compelled to become outcasts for life. Describing some of the sickening scenes he had witnessed among the Burman wounded, Major Crawford tells us—

"A strong prejudice appears to run, not only

against all natural deformities, but against those laboring under incurable diseases, and even against such as have been accidentally mutilated.

"There is an indescribable mixture of caprice, folly, and inhumanity in the different modes in which this is shown. A man who has lost the sight of both eyes is forbidden to enter the palace enclosure; but if he has lost the sight of one only, he may enter. The dumb also are interdicted from this privilege; and the loss of an ear or nose is a sufficient disqualification for the same honor.

"The loss of any limb, even in action, and when defending the rights of his sovereign or country, also deprives a Burman of the right of entering the palace, and is attended with the loss of court favor and preferment, all of which may account for the extraordinary conduct of some of the Burmese prisoners who were wounded, and who refused to suffer amputation; or tore off the bandages, and bled to death after it had been performed.

"One young man, who had submitted to the operation, mistook the nature of it altogether, and, conceiving that to be the mode in which the English tortured their prisoners of war, had no sooner had his shattered leg amputated than he defiantly presented his sound leg for the like operation.

"These prejudices originate from their religious belief; for they are taught by their Buddhist priests that every physical evil is a punishment—not for offences committed in this life, but for transgressions committed while their souls were in some previous

body. They are not considered as punishments for the benefit of the soul of the sufferer, but as inevitable inflictions merited by the individual on account of himself or ancestors, and the necessary results of the present imperfect order of the world. Those afflicted, consequently, experience little compassion or sympathy. There is, indeed, some merit in bestowing charity upon lepers and other beggars; but it is very trifling indeed in comparison with that of giving alms to the priests, or making gifts to temples."

But, as I have previously told you, among the Burman officials "every thing is fish that comes to net." So with these lepers, who, although they themselves and even their descendants are outcasts from society, ranked with the burners of the dead, are permitted only to marry with lepers, and denied the right of Buddhist burial by burning, a denial which is tantamount to "Christian burial" being refused to an Englishman—money can effect wonders in their favor with the government.

A wealthy leper, by permitting himself to be squeezed out of a large sum, may remain in society. A person without influence, but of respectable position, having a mere scar upon his hand, is liable to be seized, when, to avoid the scandal of a public examination, or the risk of being driven from society, he readily pays a heavy contribution.

We had been some three hours on our journey, traveling at a rate of not more than three miles each hour; for, although the rain fell lightly, the paths—they were not to be called roads—were so heavy with

water that the horses could but with difficulty keep at a good walking pace.

I had become much wearied with my position, so had Naon, for the cords cut into our arms. I resolved to ask our captors to loosen them, but just then they changed the subject of their conversation. They spoke of the means by which they had secured us. I listened, and heard "that Mikee had betrayed us."

The two soldiers, it appeared, had sought shelter in the cave from the rain, and discovering Naon and myself asleep, at once resolved to seize us as we came through the aperture, but only for the purpose of plunder, for they mistook us for traveling merchants; and Mikee, entering the cave shortly afterward, thinking him to be our servant, they fell upon him, (the mean-spirited rogue, at least so I then thought him), to save himself, told them that we were a couple of rebel foreigners, whom he had enticed to travel in his company, but intended to deliver over to the authorities at the first great town he came to, and so obtain the reward for the heads or bodies of foreigners, which reward he would readily forego if they would let him depart unharmed. As these men recapitulated this incident, they chuckled with delight at having so easily got the better of a Carian peasant. This was a bitter discovery to me. How was it possible that so much bravery could be associated with so much meanness and treachery? I know not why, but had Naon been the guilty person, I should have felt neither so much hurt, nor surprised; but Mikee, the aspiring, ambitious Mikee, verily I

could have staked my life upon his honesty. Alas! I muttered, such is the world; and so pondering, with a heavy heart, heavier with chagrin than misfortunes, rode onward, resolving never to put faith in man again. I dare say you think I was rather young for a misanthropist, but then, morbid feelings will shoot out of bitter disappointments.

But forward, across a dreary plain, through a thick jungle; then we entered a wood, through which there appeared to be but one pathway, at least for horsemen, and that but sufficiently wide for a single person. There were thickly foliaged trees on either side, and one of the soldiers looked about him suspiciously, as if he feared an ambush. Alas! I thought, who in the whole world is there to attempt *our* rescue?

"Lord of heaven! I shall be striped like a tiger," cried Naon, suddenly, writhing under the cords.

At this, the soldiers turned round savagely; they did not, however, utter a word, but goaded their own horse till it literally dragged our poor beast after them. Then there was a rustling sound, but whether among the foliage of the trees, or in the tall grass beneath, I could not distinguish, for almost simultaneously came the sharp crack of a gun; the soldiers fell to the ground, and their horse started off with fright dragging ours after it; but a horse, with two persons upon its back, proving a dead weight to the frightened animal, it very speedily came to a dead halt, and gave us an opportunity of discovering the cause of this strange accident.

The hunter, Mikee, was standing over the soldiers completing the scheme he had so cleverly contrived for our rescue. Being aware that we must pass through that path, Mikee, upon quitting the cave, had hastened forward, and having secured one end of a long rope to a tree, had at the other made a large slip-noose, which, while watching among the foliage above, he held in his hand till the men passed beneath, when, with the skilfulness of an elephant-hunter, he dropped it over their heads, and discharged the rifle at the same time; thus the frightened horse soon carrying his riders to the end of their tether, the noose tightening, grasped them both in its embrace; and as at the same moment the tree to which the end of the cord was secured, put forth its power of resistance, the gallant Burmans became, to their great astonishment, jerked upon the earth. Having secured his prisoners to the tree, the hunter ran forward and disengaged Naon and myself from the horse.

"A friend in such need is a friend indeed, my brave Mikee," said I.

As for Naon, he appeared bewildered with astonishment; for a minute he stood silent, staring about, shrugging his shoulders and rubbing his arms, then confusedly he said: "Then the Carian is not a rogue; but—but my arms are so benumbed, I can't speak."

"Mikee has said that he would serve the noble colar, and he will not eat his own words," was the only reply the hunter made to us; but going close to the soldiers, he said, "The dogs of Burmans are not warriors—they are thieves, who would have robbed

a peaceful Carian; therefore shall they die." And he held his naked sword before the cowards, who tremblingly prayed for mercy.

"The brave hunter is just; the rogues must die, and become the food of tigers," said Naon, savagely.

"They must *not* die, at least by our own hands," said I, really fearing that the poor wretches would have been slain before my eyes.

"Let it be as the noble colar wills," replied Mikee, quietly putting up his sword.

But the cowards now prayed more vehemently than before; this time, however, it was to be slain at once, for they feared a still more terrible death by the tiger; and, enemies as they were, I pitied, nay, feared for their fate if left thus, so I said,—

"Give the miserable dogs their liberty, Mikee."

"It would be destroying ourselves, for they are more treacherous than the tigers they fear."

"The words of the hunter are wise, sahib; he knows their nature," said Naon.

"Then so let it be; for, after all, they merit their fate," said I, compelled to acquiesce.

Then, richer than ever—for we had two horses, or rather ponies, for horses are never, and ponies but seldom used in Burma, except by the Cassay cavalry—we mounted, Naon and myself bestriding one, and Mikee the other. And thus, when we had left the narrow path, and entered upon a large swamp skirted again by a wood, Mikee told me that, the previous night, even he had miscalculated his powers of endurance, for what with the day's fatigue, the

roaring of the tempest, and the soothing influence of the fire; he fell asleep, dreaming, of course, that he had discovered the White Elephant of his imagination.

Suddenly, however, he was awakened, by what, he knew not. The tempest had become hushed, the storm-wind had abated, and he heard the tramp of some animal. What could it be? not a tiger, the steps were too slow and heavy; surely it must be an elephant. His hopes whispered the subject of his dreams—a White Elephant; but no, that was impossible. Wild elephants are sociable animals, and invariably feed in herds, and the sounds he heard were those of a single animal.

He clutched the rifle, rose to his feet, and stole softly out of the cave; listened again, and heard a loud noise—a kind of compound of the bellow of the bull and grunt of the wild hog. Clutching his rifle tightly, he walked foward in the direction of the sounds, through the grass; suddenly his feet sank in a swamp caused by the rain: still keeping foward, he at length knew he was in the immediate neighborhood of the animal; nay, through the darkness could just distinguish the outlines of the object of his search. It was a large rhinoceros, luxuriating in that darkness of which it is so fond, wallowing in the swamp, and bellowing with pleasure at the agreeable sensations caused by rubbing its thick hide against a tree trunk.

This trick is practiced by these animals for their absolute preservation; for, although the rhinoceros possesses a hide which renders it safe from the claws

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of the lion and tiger, and a horn which makes it terrible to all other animals, it has a formidable enemy in a species of fly which for ever persecutes it, and from whose attacks it can only defend itself by rolling in the mud until it has become clothed with an impenetrable armor, which is kept on by the wrinkles and plaits of its skin, except about its hips, shoulders, and legs, from which the motion of the body causes it to fall off, when an itching and pain follow that cause the beast to be as thankful at the sight of a tree, against which it can rub itself, as tradition tells us were the tenantry of the Duke of Argyle at the sight of a post.

A rhinoceros; well, that was not so good as a White Elephant, still its horn and hide would fetch money; and as the pleasure the animal derived from the rubbing seemed to deprive it of its usual vigilance, it would be an easy victory. At least so thought Mikee, who, grasping the stock of his rifle, prepared to fire; but finding there was not light sufficient to take aim—for to hit the hide would be like pouring water upon oil—Mikee, like that brave French army which, after vast preparations, marched up the hill, and then—marched down again—was compelled to retrace his steps.

Greatly, however, to his astonishment, he found the cave occupied by the two armed soldiers, who immediately seized him, and would have bound his arms and legs, but for the tale he told them. Believing, however, his story, and glad that he would resign to them so willingly his share of the reward for

our capture, they let him depart when, knowing the only path they could take, he hastened forward and remained hidden in the tree till we approached, and he could rescue us; and yet I had dared to doubt this brave fellow's honesty.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RHINOCEROS HUNT.

We had nearly traversed the swamp, and were within five hundred yards of the wood, when, stopping his horse, and with eyes flashing with excitement, Mikee exclaimed—

"The rhinoceros! We must take him."

Then for a minute or so I watched the great unwieldy brute, who, with his great upper lip, which is capable of being lengthened out so as to increase his power of seizing any object, in the manner the elephant does with its trunk, was pulling down the leafy branch of a tree; which, having quickly devoured, he then placed his snout, or rather the great horn at its end, in the root, till, finding sufficient leverage, he lifted it from the earth, and, to my surprise, speedily ripped it into narrow strips, and prepared to enjoy his repast.

"Take him!" echoed Naon; adding, "the worthy hunter is brave, but he cannot do impossibilities. Why, the brute has the power of fifty oxen; his hide cannot be pierced, and he will tread us all to death with one fall of his foot."

"Will the noble colar hunt the brute?" said Mikee.

"Hunt!" said I, laughing. "Why, Mikee, the beast has no hunting legs; he can't waddle."

"The noble colar shall see, if he will try," was the reply.

"But suppose we succeed?" said I.

"His hide, his horn will repay us for our trouble," said Mikee.

"Agreed then," I said.

"The noble colar's attendant is afraid, therefore let him get off the horse," said the hunter; adding, "he can take mine."

"But what will you do, Mikee?"

"Ride behind the colar," was the reply.

Hearing which, and no doubt thinking the hunter wished to ride behind me that I might bear the brunt of the attack, Naon expressed unmistakeable doubts as to the wisdom of the arrangement. However, having faith in the hunter, I complied: and when Mikee had mounted behind me, sword in hand, I held the loaded rifle; Naon mounted Mikee's horse, and followed.

Finding we were firm in our seats, Mikee goaded the horse, and we set off at a gentle trot. Mikee, as we neared the animal, gave a strange unearthly scream; whereupon the rhinoceros, after his nature, never turning his head, set off, to my surprise, at a full trot; and thus the chase, if chase it may be termed, began. For some ten minutes we followed.

"See," I said, holding my rifle in readiness for a close attack, "he is at bay; he cannot pass those trees."

But Mikee noticed not my words; and he was right; for, although the trees would have formed a

formidable obstacle to a horse, the huge creature dashed by them as if they had been reeds; they bent against his hide, and returned to their natural position when he had passed; and thus, as he no doubt calculated, he gained upon us, for we were obliged to pick our way. The stupid brute, however, not deigning to look backward, had no sooner passed the trees than, believing himself to be safe, he stayed to feed.

"We have him now," cried Mikee; and goading the horse forward at a faster pace, we got within a few yards of him. That few yards, however, was every thing to the animal, for he was near another thicket of prickly brambles, over which hung the huge arm of a tree. Onward, with a bellow, and, as before, the arms of the trees bent before his strength. Forward again we went, goading our horse to its full speed, excited with the chase, for it was a trial of cunning against swiftness—rhinoceros *versus* horse. We neared the tree; it was too near to stop the horse; my breast came violently in contact with the branch, and over we rolled, both of us, into the thicket.

Fortunately we were but little hurt, so, remounting, we were off again, under the branch, through the thicket, as best we could, and at last made upon the rhinoceros. "Ah!" I exclaimed, seeing another thicket in the distance, to which the cunning animal was making way, "he shall not dodge us this time; here goes," and I discharged my rifle. Mikee laughed, and well he might, for the bullet, though it struck the animal, rolled off its hide harmlessly; and with a

whisk of the tail, by way, perhaps, of a slight acknowledgement of the favor, he continued to trot as before, through that thicket, and again he had made ground. In a few minutes, however, we were again upon his track, and gaining ground at every instant. It was all plain now, there were no more thickets. "Now we have him," cried Mikee, urging our beast forward.

"Stay; let me load; he will turn at us," said I.

"Not so; they never turn; we must shoot ahead," said Mikee, and in two minutes we had gained upon him some dozen yards. "Now wheel round," said Mikee, taking the rein, and in an instant we stood before the formidable monster. It was an exciting moment; my last, I believed; for seeing us in front, he stood still, at bay, too proud to turn, and evidently lashing himself into a fury.

"Let us turn, he will never overtake us," said I, giving the rein a pull, and fearfully alarmed.

"No; now is our time; give me the rein," said Mikee, coolly, and in another moment the enraged beast put down his head, pointed his horn, and ran at us with the fury and after the fashion of a wild boar. The rein, however, was in Mikee's hand, so, turning the horse short to one side, he slipped off its back behind the wild brute, and with astonishing dexterity ran his sword across the tendon of one of its heels, and the beast fell, incapable of moving, but bellowing with rage at its victor, who, quietly taking my rifle from my hand, discharged its contents into its brain.

Bravo, Mikee; you are a wonderful hunter!" I exclaimed, rather to hide my tremor (for I can assure you I trembled, more at my escape—and I thought it a narrow one—than I had in positive danger) than at any pleasure I felt at the destruction of an animal which, although so ungainly in shape, except attacked, is harmless to all but the elephant, with whom he seems to have an hereditary feud; for it is said they never meet without a duel, and seldom without the elephant meeting with its death by a thrust in the chest from its antagonist's formidable horn.

"Thanks to the lord of heaven for the sahib's escape," said Naon, riding up to us now the danger was over.

"Let us praise the courage of the brave Mikee," said I.

"Truly he is a mighty hunter," said Naon.

Then, when Mikee had cut his mark upon the hide with his sword, he said, "Now, if it please the noble colar, we will hasten to the village."

"But what is to be done with this dead beast, O brave and worthy Mikee? for surely it will be worth a large amount of silver," said Naon.

"The worthy colar will carry it before him upon his horse," said Mikee, laughing.

Naon, however, not liking to be laughed at, kept a sullen silence.

"But will the carcass be safe here from robbers?" I asked.

"Mikee will hasten to the village, where carts may be obtained," was the reply. Rejoiced to find we

were so near the river, I mounted, and we proceeded on our way in silence till we came to some large fields planted with, what at the time, from the shape, appeared to me to be thistles, and about four feet in height.

"The Lord of heaven be thanked, we are near the river, for this is the indigo plantation," said Naon.

Then it was not thistles, but indigo, that plant of which we hear so much, and generally know so little. Although in Burma the indigo plant thrives luxuriantly, the natives prepare it with small skill, simply by steeping the weed in old boats sunk in the river, and which answers the purpose of a vat. It is questionable if they know how to purify and reduce it to a hard refined consistence; or if they do, they are too indolent, and prefer to use it in a liquid state.

In other parts of Asia, however, indigo is prepared as follows:—When the plant has reached a given height, and the leaves are in good condition, they are stripped from the stalks and thrown into large pits half filled with water where they are bruised and stirred till the water becomes muddy. After a few days the water is drawn off, and the slimy sediment taken up in baskets of the shape of children's tops, or flat cakes, and dried in the sun. The people employed to sift the indigo stop their nostrils, keep a cloth before their faces, with little holes for their eyes, and drink milk every half hour to preserve them from the penetrating quality of the dust, which, notwithstanding all their precaution, gets into their throats, and causes the saliva to become blue.

At length, after traversing these extensive fields, we came to the stockade, or bamboo enclosure of a town, or rather large village, the houses of which, although numerous, were erected of wood, and built upon poles, almost all having great earthen jars filled with water upon the roofs, in readiness for fire, as also a long bamboo pole fitted with an iron hook, for the purpose of pulling down the thatch, as well as another pole, at the end of which was an iron grating some three feet square, for the purpose of suppressing any sudden conflagration by pressure. The greater part of the houses were small, and of unplaned wood, as befitted the rank in life of their inhabitants. One, however, was much larger than the rest, and from the lacquer upon the poles and doors, was evidently the residence of the head man, as no less a person dared presume upon such a luxury.

The town consisted of two well-paved streets, which crossed each other at right angles, and were drained by gutters along the sides. The lines of houses were at intervals interspersed with kioums, or monasteries, whose triple gilded roofs, shaded by the foliage of the trees, which arose from the ground behind, as also those of the many pagodas (the works of religious merit of living and dead Burmans), with their winding paths, gave an imposing appearance to the scene.

Passing through the wicket, near which was an ancient piece of cannon, and a few indolent soldiers lying upon the ground chewing betel and smoking cigars, to our delight, we saw a shed in which were

jars of water, placed there by some charitable person for the benefit of pedestrians of the poorer class, of which we gladly availed ourselves; and as we were desirous of passing through the streets unobserved, it was fortunate that when we entered the town the people were engaged in attending the procession of a young novice, who was about entering upon the priesthood.

This youth—he was not more than ten years of age—was wrapped in a yellow robe, and mounted upon a handsomely caparisoned horse led by two servants. The procession was led by a band of music, then a host of seniors, in the midst of whom rode the hero of the day, followed by a vast number of his male and female relations and friends, accompanied by their whole families, each person carrying in his hand a present for the priests of the monastery of which the youth was about to become a member.

So far had we passed through the town without calling the especial attention of any of the multitude. When, however, the procession took a different direction from that in which Mikee was leading us, I became alarmed, for we came face to face with a recruiting party, who were conducting conscripts down to the war-boats; but such a recruiting party that you do not see in England. There were about a hundred peasants, who, being destitute of the money to purchase substitutes, were being either driven at the point of the spear, or, with their arms and legs tied together, carried upon the shoulders of the soldiers down to the war-boats in the river.

Fortunately I was too well disguised, or the soldiers too much engaged to notice me, for they passed on their way, when Mikee, who had observed my fears, said—

"The noble colar is safe; the good priest will befriend us;" and as he spoke we stopped at the entrance of a kioum, where the hunter was warmly greeted by a yellow-robed, shaven-pated, round-faced Poonghi (priest), who led us into the large space—it could not be called a hall, for there were no sides—wherein it is customary to entertain travelers, and among several of whom we took up our station for the night, greatly to the chagrin of Naon, who, looking around him nervously, said—

"It would have been wiser, sahib, had the worthy hunter conducted us at once to his boat."

"It is not possible; Mikee must remain here this night, for to-morrow he will be put into law," said the hunter

"Put into law," I repeated, with surprise, for so tedious and expensive is that operation in Burma, that "may he be put into law" is the greatest misfortune that a Burman can wish his worst enemy; but for some reason Mikee made no reply. An hour afterward, the iron tongue of the great bell which marks the passing hours in Burmese towns, warned us it was time for sleep.

"By the way, the Burmese method of dividing the time is curious, and peculiar to themselves. Their year, like our own, consists of twelve months, although their months, being alternately of twenty-

nine and thirty-days, this year consists of three hun dred and fifty-four days, and is a lunar year. In order, however, to preserve the solar time, the fourth month of every third year is doubled, which brings the year to three hundred and sixty-four days. The additional days and hour are supplied, as occasion demands, by a royal order, under the advice of the court Brahmins, and by custom are added to the third month of the year.

Their great peculiarity, however, is the non-enumeration of the days of the entire month; for instance, instead of enumerating as we do, from the first to the last day of the month, they divide each month into two two parts, which they designate as the days of the increasing and the waning moon. The first day of a month, for example, they term the first of the increasing moon, and the sixteenth they term the first of the waning moon.

The week, like our own, is divided into seven days; instead, however, of hours, they divide the day into sixty parts, called Nari. The most popular division of the day is into eight divisions, or watches, four being allotted to the day and four to the night, each watch being equal to three of our hours. The time-keeper employed is a copper cup, perforated at the bottom, and placed in a vase of water, which sinks to a particular mark at the close of each Nari, when a great bell, suspended from a tall belfry close to the house of the chief magistrate is struck.

In the capital there is a regular establishment for the service of the bell, and a custom that, if the time-

keeper on duty commits any error, his companions are at liberty to carry him off and sell him at once in the public market (you must remember that a value is set upon every man, woman, and child in the kingdom, in order that they may be sold off, if necessary, like their goods and chattels, to pay debts of their own or their relations'). With reference, however, to the time-keeper, it is merely a form; the sale is a mock one, the price being always fixed at a very trifling amount, so that the offender may ransom himself without difficulty.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIKEE HAS HIS FORTUNE TOLD BY THE CROWS, AND UNDERGOES THE ORDEAL OF WATER.

Awaking the next morning and finding that priest, travelers, Mikee, indeed all but Naon, had left the hall, I stared with surprise; and rubbing my eyes to make quite sure that they were open, said—

"The hunter, the priest, where are they? Truly, I must have slept deep into the morning."

"It is not so, sahib; it is little more than daybreak," said Naon.

"But the hunter?"

"Hush, sahib; not the hunter, but Mikee the oil-carrier here."

"Well, then, the oil-carrier," I replied, impatiently.

"Mikee has gone to ask what will be the result of his lawsuit to-day."

"Ask whom? who can tell but the judge?"

"The crows," said Naon, stolidly.

"Ask the crows?" I repeated, with a laugh.

"Truly, it is so. Let the sahib follow, and he will see."

"Ask the crows? Are the crows then learned in the law?' And I laughed heartily at the idea.

"It is the custom," was the serious reply.

Of course I bowed to custom, and then thought that, since Rome had her first boundaries determined by the flight of one bird, and at another time was saved by the cackling of geese, there might be nothing very wonderful, after all, in a lawsuit being decided by the sapient-looking crow, who may probably possess more nous than we are aware of. That the crow, however, is a shrewd observer, and smart in his transactions, any person ambitious of shooting one may very easily discover by the tax that will be laid upon his patience. However, following Naon to the back of the kioum, I mentally collected matter enough for a new page in natural history.

Mikee was seated upon a square of grass, patiently endeavoring to stand upright upon their delicate savory legs, three animals made of cooked rice—a lion, an ox, and an elephant. It was no easy matter, for as fast as he stood up one, another fell down; then when he had re-adjusted them, the rice trunk of the elephant, the rice head of the lion, or the rice tail of the ox would tumble off. At length, however, he succeeded, and the three animals stood forth upon the grass boldly, when the spectators—priests and travelers—clapped their hands with delight.

Then all present withdrawing a good distance from the artificial animals, and throwing themselves upon the ground, patiently watched the movements of a pair of old crows who were seated upon the branches of a tree. It was a tedious affair, for it was nearly two hours before the learned feathered couple would take the least notice of the animals. At the

end of that period, after much flying about, and a great deal of caw-cawing, as if to satisfy themselves the men creatures had no intention of moving, they flew down to the rice animals.

Then came the excitement of the spectators, for the crows evidently had some difficulty in arriving at a decision. First they appeared as if about to attack the lion; at which Mikee's face beamed with pleasure, for that would be a sure sign of victory; but no, they passed to the ox, and for a minute seemed inclined to try rice beef. This was not quite so agreeable to Mikee, for that was a sign that matters would be made up by accommodation. When, however, they neglected the ox, and were about to peck at the elephant, the hunter's face became clouded indeed, for that was a sign that his antagonist would gain the day. The birds, however, having again laid their heads or beaks together in consultation, suddenly attacked the lion, one flying away with his head, the other with his body; at which Mikee gave a shout of joy, and the spectators arose to their feet and congratulated him upon his approaching victory—a proceeding I thought very much like "counting your chickens before they are hatched."

Having thus tested his coming fortunes, Mikee, accompanied by the priests and travelers, proceeded before the judge who was to try the cause—which, by the way, was merely a dispute with a merchant of the town about the payment for the carriage of some oil from the wells. The merchant was a rogue, and declared that he had paid Mikee the sum in

question ; while Mikee declared upon oath that he had not received one tical. I much regretted not going with them before the judge ; yet, as I did not care about placing my head in the jaws of the lion, I preferred to remain in the hall and await their return.

As we re-entered, Naon went up to a large lacquered chest filled with books, and taking one nearest to hand, he said,—

"This is Deitton, sahib."

"Deitton," I repeated looking, at the book, which was composed of thin stripes of bamboo delicately plaited, and varnished over in such a manner as to form a hard surface for a covering of leaf gold, upon which the letters were traced in black glittering japan, and the leaves ornamented and illuminated with wreaths and figures of gold upon a parti-colored ground of red, green, and black. It was, in fact, a kind of dictionary or hand-book of superstitious omens of good or evil fortune, to be drawn from objects too numerous to mention, but of which I will give you some slight notion.

"No person should commence building a house, or any business of importance, without first discovering a fortunate day.

"In building, the beams should be examined, for those which are equally large at the top and the bottom are males ; those which are thicker at the bottom than the top are females ; while those that are thickest in the middle are neuters ; and those whose greatest thickness is at the top are called giants ; and when a piece of wood, on being cut, falls

to the ground and rebounds from its place, it is mon key-wood.

"If a person live in a house made of male wood, he will be always and everywhere happy. If the wood be neuter, misery will be his lot; but if the wood be giant, he will speedily die.

"If a person would learn his fortune, he must divide the two pieces of wood which form the stairs into ten compartments; and if a knot be found in the first, it is a sign the master will be honored by princes. If the knot be found in the second, he will abound in rice and all kinds of provisions. A knot in the fourth compartment is a sign that a son, a slave, a nephew, or an ox of the master will die. A knot in the sixth is a sign of riches in oxen and buffaloes; but one in the eighth portends the death of his wife. Finally, a knot in the tenth is an augury of great possessions of gold and silver."

Knots in the wood of which boats are made, are the cause of similar superstition; and even involuntary movements of the eyes, the head, or the forehead are believed to indicate some pending good or bad fortune. Again,

"If a dog carry an unclean thing to the top of a house, its master will become rich.

"If a hen lay her egg upon cotton, its master will become poor.

"If a person going to conclude a lawsuit meet an other carrying brooms or spades, the suit will be long and in the end he will be deceived.

"If the wind should carry away any of the leaves

of the betel when, according to custom, it is being carried to the house of a newly-married woman, it is a sign that the marriage will be unhappy.

"If in going to war a person meet a fish, there will be no war; if he sees another catching a gnat, the mandarins will exact many presents, the client will be deceived, and the lawsuit a long one; if he meet any one carrying packages, then every thing will succeed to his wishes; if he meet a serpent, the affair will be long; if a dog, or a female elephant, or a person playing on the cymbals, all will go well."

Then they believe in chiromancy, or the art of divining by the lines of the hand, in amulets and love philtres; and, although, perhaps, their belief is not stranger than was that of the English in similar superstitions not many centuries since, I quite agree with the Italian priest Father Sangermano, who, after giving a list of these superstitions, says—"But we should never finish, were we to extract all the follies of this book; for they are so numerous, and at the same time so inconsistent with common comfort, that, as one of our oldest missionaries has observed, if a man were to be entirely guided by it, he would not have a house to live in, nor a road to walk on, nor clothes to cover him, nor even rice for his food; and yet the blind and ignorant Burmese place the greatest faith in it, and endeavor to regulate their actions according to its directions."

"Does the sahib like the Deitton?" said Naon, replacing the book in the lacquered box.

"Utter nonsense!" said I; adding, however,

thoughtfully, "Yet the Burmans are no worse in this than were the Europeans. This nonsense is at present their faith. If they ever become Europeanized, it will, as similar things have among Europeans, become their tradition—materials for poetry. The wildest traditions were once believed."

"Does the sahib know how the priests explain eclipses of the sun and moon?" said Naon; adding, when I replied in the negative, "They say that a monstrous and foul planet, or Nat, named Rahu, becoming inflamed with envy at the brightness of the sun, or moon, descends into their path, and takes them into his mouth to devour them; but is soon obliged to spit them out again, for fear they would burst his head. At other times, he covers them with his chin, or licks them with his immense tongue."

"The Chinese have a similar tradition," said I; but before Naon could reply, the priests and travelers returned with Mikee, who was as damp as a half-drowned kitten; his scanty clothes being saturated, and the water dripping from his hair down his sides and over his face."

"How is this?" said I, with surprise.

"Victory, noble colar; the praw of justice could not decide without the ordeal, and by that means I have prospered," said Mikee.

"The crows, then, were right," I said, laughing; and when he had changed his garments, and we were partaking of a kind of congratulatory tiffin, or breakfast he told me that when the judge heard both litigants take the terrible oath as to the truth of their declara-

tions, one that the money had been paid, and the other that it had not, his wisdom was insufficient to enable him to decide; and, moreover, as the bribes for a favorable decision had been equally liberal on both sides, he was compelled to have the case settled by means of the ordeal of water.

Accordingly, both litigants were taken to the town-tank, near the river, and the priests having performed the usual purificatory ceremonies, and prayed the proper length of time, they both entered, and waded in the water till it reached their breasts; two men, one by the side of each litigant, placed a long board upon their heads, which, at a signal from the judge, they pressed downward, thus immersing them beneath the water, where they remained out of sight for nearly three minutes, when the merchant, nearly suffocated, raised his head. As for Mikee, as bold beneath the water as upon land, he held his breath for nearly half a minute longer; until, indeed, he was lifted up by the officer, who, among the plaudits of the friends of the successful party, proclaimed the decision of the court to be in favor of Mikee, who, as he concluded, said, modestly—

"But, O noble colar! the crows foretold the truth, and the invisible Spirit of Justice aided thy servant, whose own merit in the matter was but as a shadow."

"Truly, the hunter is as fortunate as he is brave," said Naon.

"And as modest as he is fortunate," said I; when Mikee, as if to verify my words by avoiding more praise, said—

"Mikee will now prepare the boat, and return at yettee (ncon), when the noble colar and his attendant must be prepared to accompany the oil-carrier as his servants;" and so saying he left the kioum.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DUEL BETWEEN A CROCODILE AND A TIGER.

PUNCTUALLY to the time he had named, Mikee returned in the best of spirits; for he had sold the carcass of the dead rhinoceros to a merchant, and then, that it might be supposed we were his servants, we helped to carry the oil-jars down to the boat, which we found ready to receive us, in charge of a relation of the Carian, named Seree; and at last I began to entertain some hope of reaching the capital, or at least Yenang-young, in safety, for it was improbable that either soldiers or nobles would molest the boat of an oil-carrier, whose merchandize produced so good a revenue to the government.

Thus, each taking an oar, we sent the boat merrily along the waters of the Irrawaddy, through an aquatic population, second only to that to be found upon the rivers of the neighboring empire of China, past boats steered by men, but whose crews consisted of female farmers, who sat with their legs across, paddling the craft along with their short oars; and while they kept time with the strokes, loudly singing a jovial chorus, the more jovial that they had found a good market for their onions, pulse, or greens. Past small forests of teak-trees, floating downward to Rangoon, war-boats, with their fifty or sixty rowers, each on

its way to join the native fleet, as a contribution to the state of some village or town. Past rice and baggage boats, and government craft laden with conscripts, who had been torn away from their wives and families, and were being forcibly carried to the seat of war. Past great boats, whose number of rowers and canopy showed them to be owned by great officials, and others whose elaborate and costly-gilded sides, oars, and sails proved the owner to be of royal rank.

The waters were at their highest level, and filled the winding inlets far into the land, making smaller rivers. The shores ascended as we proceeded, and were lined with magnificent trees, frequently into groves. Thus till night we traveled. Past ancient caves, formed many centuries since in the rocky sand stone cliffs, and which, from the entrances being partially bricked up, so as to reduce the passages to small doorways, we could see were used as human habitations. Then along a finely-wooded shore, set with palms and studded with pagodas, and skirted by small villages.

Past islands covered with water, and from which emerged the pigeon-house-looking habitation of peasants. Past meadows converted for a time into swamps; and again, entire villages so inundated that the peasants had hung their carts to the trees to prevent their being carried away by the currents.

Away again; we work hard at our poles and before sundown get beyond the flood level. The shores are drier, and we land at a village celebrated for its

manufacture of saltpetre, where, at the hut of a friend of Mikee, we took up our lodging for the night, and where, during the following day, for the rains fell so heavily, we were obliged to lay up "under the weather;" a delay that afforded me an opportunity of observing the means by which the Burmans manufacture saltpetre.

The raw material is an efflorescence of the soil, in which it is found to a depth of about six inches. The loose earth, when first scraped together, is thrown into baskets lined with clay, and fixed upon wooden frames; after which, the earth is covered with a layer of rice-husks; upon which water is poured, and allowed to trickle through. The water takes up the salt, and carries it in solution into an earthen pot below. The same water is a second time filtered through the earth, and is then removed to be boiled down.

The boiling takes place in broad shallow cast-iron pans of Chinese manufacture, raised sufficiently from the ground to permit a small fire to be kindled beneath. In these the brine is evaporated, and the salt, crystalizing on the sides of the vessel, is removed by a stick. One boiling is completed in twenty-four hours. Each iron pan receives about three of the earthern pots full of brine, and yields three viss (three pounds weight) of the impure saltpetre, which is again dissolved in pure water; and by a second boiling of the same duration, is reduced to half the amount of pure white saltpetre, the salt first obtained being very impure, red, and earthy.

By these primitive means—indeed, all the arts in Burma are in the most primitive state—is the vast quantity of saltpetre obtained, which is chiefly used in the manufacture of those fireworks for which these people are even more celebrated than the Chinese.

In the morning, finding the rain had subsided, we continued our voyage; and as Mikee told us, that for the next two days we should travel along a rugged and uninhabited shore, we took care to provide ourselves with a plentiful supply of boiled rice, pickled tea, and buffalo beef, besides hooks and lines, for the purpose of catching fish, and a couple of old-fashioned English muskets; all of which the hunter paid for liberally out of the proceeds of the sale of the carcass of the rhinoceros.

That day we rowed so hard, that before sundown we reached the shore of a ruined town celebrated as the scene of one of those cruel tragedies so common in Asiatic countries, and which in themselves should long since have destroyed the tawdry sentiment made upon young minds by the tinseled pictures in the "Arabian Nights" and other celebrated Oriental story-books, wherein cruelty, wanton luxury, and effeminacy are so falsely colored that, in place of disgust, a weed of pleasure—tall, rank, and enervating—is planted, and left to grow among the more vigorous, real, and healthy ingredients of the European mind. I will, however, tell you the story.

The King Chenguza married a relative—a beautiful, virtuous, and accomplished woman—of whom he was very fond; but then the loves and hates of despots

are as changeable as the wind. So, in a fit of intemperance, becoming jealous of his queen, Chenguza pronounced sentence of death; and as there are wretches in every nation ready to execute the command of a tyrant, however sanguinary, the innocent lady was dragged from the palace and enclosed in a sack of scarlet cloth richly ornamented. Thus confined, she was put on board a boat, when the sack being suspended between the narrow necks of two earthen jars, the whole was sunk in the deepest part of the Irrawaddy river. This diabolical act was performed in open day before thousands of spectators, amongst whom were many of the friends and relatives of the murdered queen, whose father retired from court to hide his anguish in secrecy.

Bad deeds, however great or small, bring their own punishment: so with this king, for, disgusted with this cruel act, the nobles fled, the army rebelled, and another sovereign was placed upon the throne. King Chenguza, however, bad as he was, was no coward, (although that was little in his favor, for a very brave man may also be a very bad man). So, some time after his defeat, preferring death to a disgraceful exile, he caused a small boat to be privately prepared, and kept in readiness at the gaut, or landing-place. Disguising himself in the habit of a private gentleman, and attended only by two menials, he left his hiding-place by break of day, and rowed toward the river-gate of the king's palace; and being challenged by a sentinel, he answered in a loud voice, "Chenguza, the lawful lord of the palace, and thy king," when

the astonished guards, overawed, fell back, permitting the frantic tyrant to rush toward the interior. At the gates, however, of the inner palace, he was met by the father of the murdered queen, who, seeing the tyrant, slew him on the spot; thus at the same moment avenging his daughter and ridding the world of a monster.

To continue, however, my narrative.

When we reached this melancholy spot—the site of a town once the abiding-place of the ancient kings of Pegu, but then consisting alone of monumental ruins for the greater part lost in a dense forest and jungle, and reverberating with the terrific roars and growls of wild animals—I must confess that my heart beat quick with apprehension, for shortly it would become pitch dark.

"Let us land and seek a retreat within yon ruin," said I, pointing to the remains of a temple.

"It would not be wise; it is too late; before we could secure the boat, the tigers would be upon us," said Mikee.

"To remain afloat during the night will be worse, for how can we secure ourselves against the crocodile?" said I.

"We must not go ashore," replied Mikee, firmly; adding, "but secure the boat to a tree, and keep watch by turns."

No sooner said tha done. Mikee pulled the boat near enough in shore to throw a running noose over the branch of a tree; after which, we pulled out again into deep water.

"I will keep first watch," said Naon.

This being agreed, Seree laid down beneath the raised portion of the prow; and Mikee and myself, with our firearms by our side, stretched ourselves at full length in the centre of the boat. Mikee and Seree were soon asleep. For my own part, tired as I was, I could not close my eyes—a difficulty that became greater when, out of the utter darkness, the grand orb of night arose in full glittering brilliancy, burnishing the surface of the waters so that they reflected the great tall trees and rugged cliffs and jagged shores.

Then, as I lay upon my back, I discovered the cause of Naon's offer to keep the first watch—he was, in fact, too frightened to sleep; and with listening ears, his finger upon the trigger of his musket, he gazed in every direction. He had been sitting for some time in the stern, when, as if suddenly remembering that men had been dashed from that position by the tails of crocodiles, he clambered upon the bamboo canopy beneath which Seree lay sleeping—an action which caused me to feel very uneasy; for so superstitious are the Burmans in the belief that if any person walks over them, some terrible evil will soon happen, and that they will be unfortunate for the rest of their days, that no house is erected higher than one story. Therefore, a person can offer no greater insult to a recumbent man than to walk over his body, or sit above him. However, as it was not my affair, I closed my eyes and endeavored to sleep.

I had partially succeeded, when the boat rocked

nearly to capsizing. Seree had awakened, and finding Naon above him, was not only belaboring him with abuse, but would have attacked him with his fists, but for Mikee (who, like myself, for the safety of us all, remained in the middle of the boat to prevent its upsetting) exclaiming—

"Is Seree so foolish that he would upset the boat, and so become a mouthful for the crocodile?"

"The crocodile!" said Seree, almost paralysed at the word.

"The crocodile. See—beware," said Mikee, pointing to a great log floating in the shallow water near the shore.

"Hush! be silent, and watch," said Mikee; and with suspended breath we gazed at the monster.

For five minutes it remained motionless; then it moved further in shore, among the tall grass.

"It scents some beast," said I.

And I was right, for then came a grunt, a growl, and the heavy footsteps of some large brute.

"Elephant coming to drink," said Naon.

"It is not so. You will see," said Mikee.

And as he spoke, a rhinoceros and a tiger came to the edge of the river. These animals are frequently found together, the former being the only tenant of the forest who will associate with that dread of the animal kingdom—the tiger.

Then, as we rested upon the bosom f the river, with but a single thin plank between us and the jaws

of a crocodile, and near a shore so formidably guarded, I must admit that something very like a great terror came over me. The great flashing eyeballs of the beautiful savage seemed to be glaring at me in particular; and I feared it would plunge into the river and attack the boat; no uncommon feat with tigers, for at Singapore they swim from the mainland to the island, help themselves to a man—they prefer natives—and back again in an incredibly short time.

"There is no fear from the tiger," said Mikee, as if he had divined my thoughts; but as the animal came still further into the water, I cried—

"To the oars; let us pull off."

This, however, was not necessary, for the next moment the tiger gave a fierce growl, so long, so loud that the sound rang in my ears for hours after.

"The crocodile is at him; let them fight it out," said Mikee.

And it was our best course, for the reptile had seized one of the hind legs of the tiger, who, after its first growl of surprise and agony, turned round and dashed its fore claws into the eyes of its screaming enemy. The struggle lasted some minutes, but was ultimately finished by the crocodile, which, by being in its own element, had the full use of its immense strength, and so kept its victim's head beneath the water till it was suffocated, when it dragged the carcass to the bed of the river.

"The Lord of heaven be praised that the ravenous reptile hungered for the tiger," said Naon.

"The colar speeks reverent words. Great, indeed, should be our praise, and thanks to Heaven, that the beasts of the forest have been sent to ward from us an attack which, in this boat, we could not have resisted," replied Mikee.

This incident redoubled our watchfulness; indeed, I believe that I alone slept the remainder of that night, while Mikee, Seree, and Naon kept watch.

CHAPTER XX.

A WONDERFUL CAVE, AND A BRAHMIN ASTROLOGER.

At daybreak we resumed our oars, and pulled long and lustily with the hope of reaching a town or village before nightfall; and we were rewarded for our labor, for long before that time we sighted the tee, or umbrella tops of pagodas, which made me exclaim joyfully—

"This night, at least, we shall sleep in a human habitation."

"In a human habitation, yes; in a town, no," said Mikee thoughtfully.

"What mean you, Mikee?" I asked.

"The noble colar may believe his servant ungrateful, but Mikee must seek, to know his fortune before the soles of his feet touch the soil of yonder town."

"But how? from whom? in this desolate country."

"From the holy Brahmin who foretold the luck which is to come," replied the hunter, reverently.

"Is the holy man a fish? or a beast of the forest? that he should have cast his residence hereabouts," said Naon.

"The colar must have patience, and he will discover," replied Mikee, sternly; and so ended the conversation.

At length we reached some high rocks which ran parallel with the left bank of the river and were washed by the tide. Rowing along these rocks till we had reached nearly midway, we came to what at first appeared to be a large fissure, but which I afterward found to be one of those wondrous formations effected by time and nature, and which man, in his presumption, and for want of a better simile, so glibly compares to his own works.

Imagine a cavern fifteen miles in length, through which flowed the rushing waters of the Irrawaddy in their passage to another and smaller river, and a magnificently vaulted roof covered with stupendous stalactites glittering in the dim light received from either entrance, and you will realize that through which we then passed, for a distance of at least two miles, when, to my astonishment, we came to a flight of steps, apparently hewn by man out of the left hand wall of the cavern.

"It is here," said Mikee, "that our voyage ends, for it is in this secluded place that the holy Brahmin contemplates divine things."

"But are we to sleep in this water cave?" said I.

"Thy servant will consult the pleasure of the holy man," said Mikee, ascending the steps, and striking a small bell suspended near the vaulted doorway.

With great curiosity I kept my eyes upon the door. It opened: a venerable man, clothed in white, and with a cap of the same color, made his appearance, before whom the hunter bent his body as lowly as the narrow stairs would permit.

What passed between them I know not, for they spoke in such low tones that I could not catch a syllable. Whatever it might have been, we were satisfied, for when the holy man disappeared within his cave, Mikee said—

"The holy man will provide us with lodging for the night; follow."

Mikee led the way up the steps, along a narrow passage into a vaulted chamber, which seemed to have been hewn out of the rock, where, when we had kindled a fire and warmed our food, he left us to—I suppose—seek another interview with his friend the Brahmin.

"Truly it is wonderful that the holy Brahmin permits such impure creatures to eat beneath his roof," said Naon.

"This is a separate cavity of the rock, Naon; and thus, at least in Burma, where the Brahminical religion is not tolerated; not followed by the people, the holy man's caste will not suffer," said I; adding, "yet it is rare to find a Brahmin hermit in Burma."

"The Burmans are followers of Buddha under the form of Guadama; but the kings of Ava have always been partial to the Brahmins, who are the astrologers of the court, and without consulting whom no affair, either of public or private importance, is undertaken; and that has made them so popular that it is rare to find a viceroy or great lord who has not one or more in his household," said Naon; adding, "this holy Brahmin was one of the royal astrologers, and a favorite of the king, when thy servant was at

the capital. He has probably since been disgraced, and prayerfully awaits here restoration to favor, performing self-sacrifices and studying the holy books."

"The holy books; you mean the Vedas, the Shasters."

"I do, sahib; they are the books of a cruel creed, a mockery of the Lord of heaven's goodness; a creed that imposes upon its disciples foolish and wicked self-sacrifices. Some live alone, upon a little milk and fruit; some sit for many hours together, painfully endeavoring to refrain from sleep, and continually repeating a prayer. Some thrust their heads through an iron yoke of several pounds weight, three or four feet in diameter at the top, enjoining themselves to carry it till they have collected a large sum of money for the building of a religious house. Others fix heavy chains upon their legs, one end of which comes over their shoulders, while the other drags upon the ground after them. Others chain themselves by the foot to a tree, resolving to await there till they die. Some use wooden shoes stuck full of nails in the inside; some sleep upon the ground with one leg higher than the other, and their arms raised above their heads.

"Indeed, they are guilty of many other follies, such as placing their heads where their heels should be, and so repeating their prayers; or hanging with their heads downward over a fire; confining themselves in cages so small that they cannot move in them; while others seek to please the Creator by throwing them-

selves into the river Ganges, with the hope of being devoured by crocodiles."

"But their holy books? have you read them, Naon?" I said.

"If the sahib will listen, his servant will repeat the most curious portion of their Shasters.

"To what does it relate?" I asked.

"The first formation of the world, and the creation of living creatures," said he.

"Then relate it."

Naon complied, and I give you his epitome in his own words; and if you find it tedious, I shall miss my great object, namely, that of placing before you, plainly, simply, an account of a book which although hitherto only read by the learned, is in fact pleasing as a romance, and deeply interesting as being the Bible, or basis of the religious belief of one of the most ancient of the world's sects.

"Thus, then, sahib," began Naon, "the Shasters tell us that the great God, being alone, bethought himself how he might make his wondrous excellences and power manifest to others, for his great virtue had been obscured, if it had not been communicated to his creatures; and what might give better evidence than the creation of a world, and creatures therein?

"Thus, as the groundwork of this mighty work men call the universe, the Lord made four elements: earth, air, fire, and water, which, although at first all mingled together in confusion, he separated by a breath; whereupon the waters arose in a bubble of a round form, like an egg, which, like circles in a river,

spread and expanded till the firmament which now encompasses the whole world became clear and transparent.

"Of the sediment and some liquid substance remaining, the Lord made a round ball which he called the lower world; the more solid part being the earth the more liquid the seas, but both making one globe. He by a great noise or humming sound placed them in the midst of the firmament, in which he created a sun and moon to distinguish the seasons; and thus the four elements, that were at first mixed together, became separate, and assigned to their several places —the air, the earth, the water, and the fire. The air filled up whatsoever was empty, the fire began to nourish with its heat, the earth and the sea brought forth its living creatures, and thus the great globe was created.

"The world having had its beginning from four elements, so it was measured by four main points of the compass, east, west, north, and south, and was to be continued for four ages, and to be peopled by four castes, or sorts of men.

"God having thus made the world and the creatures thereto belonging, as a creature more worthy than the rest, and one that might be most capable of, the works of God, created man from the bowels of the earth, his head appearing first, and afterward his body; into which God conveyed life, when color began to show itself red in his lips, his eyelids began to disclose the two lights of nature, the parts of his body put themselves into motion, and his understand

ing being informed, he acknowledged his Maker, and gave him worship. That this creature might not be alone, who was made by nature sociable, God seconded him with a wife; and the first man's name was Pourous, and his wife's name was Parcoutee; and they lived together, feeding upon the fruits of the earth, without destruction of any living creature.

"These two had four sons, named Brammon, Cuttery, Shuddery, and Wyse. Over the natures of each of the boys a separate element predominated. Brammon was earthly, therefore melancholy and ingenious; so God endowed him with knowledge, and appointed him to impart his precepts and laws unto his people, his grave and serious look best fitting him for such a purpose; for which cause God gave him a book containing the form of divine worship and religion.

"Cuttery was fiery, therefore martial; so God gave him power to sway kingdoms with the sceptre, and to bring men into order, that the public weal might thrive by united endeavors for the common good; as an emblem of which, the Almighty put a sword into his hand, the instrument of victory and dominion.

"Shuddery was of a phlegmatic constitution, and therefore of a peaceful disposition; and so it was thought meet he should be a merchant, to enrich the commonwealth by traffic, so that every place might abound with all things by the use of shipping and navigation: as a monitor to put him in mind of which course of life, he had a pair of balances put into his hand, and a bag of weights hung at his girdle.

"Wyse, being of an airy temper, was full of contrivances and inventions, was able, by his first thoughts, to form anything that belonged to the mechanic handicraftsman; for which purpose he had a bag of tools, consisting of such variety as were necessary to effectuate the works of fancy or conceit.

"For these four sons wives were at the same time created by God, who placed them at the four winds. One at the east, another at the west, a third at the north, and a fourth at the south; to each of which points he directed the footsteps of the brothers, who thereby found a wife assimilating to his own disposition. Thus the four quarters of the world became peopled with a prosperous, and, for some time happy race, who were instructed in religion and their duties to God by Brammon, the keeper of the holy book and commandments; in rule and dominion by Cuttery; in traffic and merchandise by Shuddery; and in inventions and handicrafts by Wyse. Of which four castes the world consisted, every one of them living in their several qualities, keeping their tribes free from confusion, or interfering with each other.

"But, alas! where there are many men there will be many evils. Prosperity, that makes us forgetful of ourselves, began to confound goodness, and turn everything out of order. Brammon grew neglectful of his piety; Cuttery grew cruel and full of usurpation; Shuddery grew deceitful in the weights and balances, and practised cheating among his brethren; and Wyse lost his conscience in his dealings, and became a spendthrift, making the profits that came by his in

ventions but the furtherances of riot and excess; and as they were thus evil in themselves, so were they evil one toward another. Brammon was envious of Cuttery's greatness. Cuttery failed to give Brammon the pre-eminence of his birth, and forgetting the holy book, as if his might had been sufficient to give him the right of priority, he placed all excellence in rule and authority, thereby prizing his own laws before those of God, because they came from his brother.

"Again, Shuddery pleased himself with the slaughter of those that displeased him; laid taxations upon Shuddery, and drained the profit of Wyse's labors. Then Wyse, seeing Brammon lose his respect for religion, the more to make him despised, sought to bring a new form of religion, communicated to him in a vision concerning the worship of images, and bowing to pagods.

"Thus God grew angry at this great wickedness. The heavens were clothed with blackness and terror; the seas began to swell as if they meant to join in man's destruction; a great noise was heard aloft, such as dismayed mortals; and thunder and lightning flashed from the poles, such as seemed to threaten a final wreck to the earth; but, as if the world needed cleansing of its defilement and pollution, there came a flood that covered all the nations in the depths. Thus the bodies had their judgment, but the souls were lodged in the bosom of the Almighty; and so concluded the first age of the world.

"But though God's justice was so great that he would not let wickedness go unpunished, yet he

created another world that he might have new creatures, to whom his wisdom, power, and mercy might be declared. To this end God descended from heaven upon a great mountain, and cried—"Rise up Bremaw, the first of living creatures in the second age. The earth then rendered up Bremaw, who did acknowledge and worship his maker; and by a second and third command from the same place, he raised up Vystney and Ruddery. To Bremaw he gave the power to make creatures, to Vystney the power to preserve, and to Ruddery the power to destroy creatures, because he knew they would be wicked and deserve a judgment amongst them.

"Now that Bremaw might have power to make creatures, God endowed him with abilities of production and creation; and that Vystney might preserve the creatures when made, the Lord gave all things into his power that might tend to the preservation of those that Bremaw should make; therefore he made Vystney lord of the sun and moon, of the clouds, and showers, and dews that fall upon the earth; lord of the hills and valleys; disposer of the changes of the year; the conferrer of riches, health, honor, and whatever tended to the well being of man and the rest of his creatures.

"And that Ruddery might be a fit executioner of God's justice, the Lord gave into his possession whatever might tend to the destruction of living creatures; therefore Ruddery was made lord of death and judgment, and all that might tend to the punishment of man, whether it was sickness, famine

war, or pestilence, or anything else that might be a plague for sin.

"To each of these persons the Lord assigned a determinate time for remaining upon earth. Bremaw's term was the shortest, as he required less time to conclude his work of creation; after which, he was taken up to the Almighty. Vystney was kept upon earth till he had doubled Bremaw's term, because there was longer need of his preservation; and because the world should end in destruction, the continuance of Ruddery upon earth was three times as long, so that, when the great day of judgment should come, he might destroy all the bodies, and carry the souls with him to the place of glory.

"Thus did Bremaw repeople the earth, Vystney provide all things necessary for the substance and preservation of the creatures Bremaw made, and thus did Ruddery disperse afflictions, sickness, death, and judgment, according as the sons of men did by their wickedness, invoke this smart upon themselves; and this was the order God took for restoring of people to inherit the earth in the second age of the world.

"But God knowing there would be evil government where there was not the establishment of his government and fear, bethought himself of giving them laws to restrain the evil within them that was the cause of the destruction of the former age; therefore, descending to a high mountain, he called Bremaw to him, and out of a dark and dusky cloud, with certain glimpses of his glory, he magnified himself to

Bremaw, telling him that the cause why he brought destruction on the former age was because they did not observe the instructions contained in the book delivered to Brammon. So, delivering a book out of the cloud into the hand of Bremaw, he commanded him to acquaint the people with the things contained therein.

"The second age, however, in course of time, becoming as corrupt as the former, the Lord gave charge to Ruddery to cause the earth to send out a wind to sweep the nations as dust from the face of the globe, which being done, a third age was created, which in its turn becoming as corrupt as the others, was swallowed up in the bowels of the earth, leaving only a few people to replenish the world, to begin the fourth and last age,—that in which we live, which will be longer than the others, yet ultimately be destroyed by fire, when Ruddery will carry up all the souls to heaven with him, although their bodies will all perish."

"It is an ingenious romance, yet without authority for these cruelties so commonly practised by its believers," said I, when Naon had finished.

"No, sahib, for these writings were the product of the ingenious brain of a good man groping for light in the midst of darkness. The cruelties originated in the hearts of his degenerate descendants, whose vanity, engendered by that pride of caste which teaches them that they are the highest and holiest of God's creatures, blinds their vision, or hardens their minds to those revealed truths which the

founder of their faith, but for his ignorance, would have cherished in the holy of holies of his soul," said Naon, with a warmth and eloquence that surprised me, and who then began to compare the pagan creed with the faith of his Portuguese fathers; but was interrupted by the reappearance of the hunter.

CHAPTER XXI.

MIKEE OBTAINS NEWS FROM THE NATS ABOUT A WHITE ELEPHANT.

So bright was the eye, so elastic the step of the hunter, when he rejoined us, that I said—

"Surely you have received good news, Mikee?"

"The cloud-curtain that has so long obscured thy servant's career will shortly be lifted, O colar."

"Then may it never again fall before thy path," said I, laughing.

"Mikee's good Nat (spirit) is at his elbow to combat the invisible Beloo (devil) which has hitherto opposed him," was the serious reply.

"Was it to hear this, then, that you brought us into this cave?" said I, really vexed that our voyage should have been stayed by such nonsense.

"The good in store will repay the cost of trouble, for the holy Brahmin, to whom the secrets of nature are known, has consulted the invisible fates."

"And what say they, Mikee?" I asked, making a painful effort to repress a laugh at his credulity.

"That the fortunate day for which thy servant has so long sought is near; that if he awaits patiently, it will soon open upon him and his race," was the earnest reply.

"Would the brave hunter have us await in his cave

until his fortunate day arrives?" asked Naon, with a shrug of the shoulders, which clearly intimated his opinion that, if so, we should have to endure a long imprisonment.

"It is not so, irreverent colar," replied Mikee, angrily; adding, "we depart at daybreak; till when, the charity of the holy man bestows upon us the shelter of his roof."

"Then we had better seek a few hours' sleep," said I; and shortly afterward our whole party were in the arms of Somnus.

At daybreak we resumed our voyage; and wher we had passed from the cavern into the open river, Mikee who sat next to me, became very-communicative with reference to the Brahmin, whom he said had been chief of the royal astrologers; but having had the misfortune to offend "the Golden Foot," his majesty had ordered him to be trodden to death by elephants. The Brahmin, however, by means of one of the courtiers, having escaped from the palace, had wandered for months through the mountains and forests of Burma into the low lands and swampy jungles of Pegu.

"Truly, O Mikee, it is strange that a Brahmin should condescend to bestow his holy regards upon a poor Carian hunter, and thus risk degradation from his high caste," said I.

"Many moons have risen and waned since the holy man, while wandering through the forest footsore and hungered, met with thy servant, who, recognising in him the Brahmin who years before had rested in the

Carian village and foretold that great fortune was in store for him, besought of the reverned personage to say how it was that one so venerable should be encountering the fatigues and dangers of the jungle· when, to the sorrow of thy servant, he replied that he was seeking an asylum where he might remain hidden from the anger of the Golden King till a great event should, through his means, burst upon the world when, most assuredly, the cloud of wrath which then, as now, obscured the glorious golden sun of majesty from his vision, would become dispelled. No sooner did the words of the holy man fall into my ears than this heart beat tumultuously with rejoicing, for in one of my voyagings and huntings I had discovered the cavern we had just left. It was there I conveyed him in my boat; and although many moons have passed since that day, not one without my conveying to the cave the necessaries of life."

"Truly thou art generous as well as brave, Mikee," said I.

"Good deeds are rewarded when least expected, by the Nats," he replied reverently.

"May thine meet with the amplest reward," said I.

"They will—they have, O noble colar; for the Nats have intermingled the fortunes of the worthless Carian with those of the holy Brahmin."

"What mean you?" I asked believing a latent meaning to be hidden in his speech.

"Let the noble colar open his ears," and bending nearer, he whispered, "the event foretold by the Brahmin was the discovery of a lord White Elephant."

"Did the priest so prophesy to the king?"

"He did; but his majesty, not believing that so much happiness could happen during his reign, turned a deaf ear to the holy man's words."

"But even should this event occur?" I asked inquiringly.

"Then the Brahmin will be restored to the golden favor," said the hunter.

"Truly so; but even then, O Mikee, how is it possible that thou canst be benefited?" said I.

"The Nats work out their own ends by their own means," he replied; adding, slowly and distinctly, "so have they disclosed to the Brahmin the district in which, even at this moment, the sacred beast is roaming."

"Do you really believe this?" said I, fearing that the priest had been practising upon the hunter's credulity for the purpose of working out some end of his own.

"It *is* true, O noble colar; for with his own holy eyes the Brahmin, while wandering in the woods near Tharee, saw the animal among a herd; and having seen it, disclosed the secret to his servant as a reward for his small services."

"Then, truly, thou mayest rejoice, O Mikee; for if this be true, and thou canst lead to its capture, thy fortunes will be great," said I, being fully aware of the wealth and honor that had been bestowed upon the fortunate few who had taken White Elephants.

"The Nats have willed it, therefore the sacred animal *shall* be found to grace the state of the Golden

Foot," he replied; and our converse ended, for it was our turn to relieve Naon and Seree from the oars.

We pulled manfully and in good spirits; for, notwithstanding that the arrival at my place of destination would be delayed, I must admit I felt greatly pleased at the prospect of witnessing an elephant hunt.

The river now ran through a fine country, which presented, I think, the most beautiful and picturesque view I had ever beheld. An ampitheatre of hills nearly surrounded us; on our left was a large island, well wooded and raised above all others I had seen; which, for the greater part being low and subject to inundations, prevented the growth of trees, and were covered with nothing but tall grass. The river, also, which was wider than at any other part, was placid as a lake, and swollen by the rains, lay sparkling beneath a clear blue sky, from which darted the magnificent rays of an Eastern sun; while the hills at every peak were surmounted by the glittering gilded roofs of pagodas. Then to the right of us arose the buildings of a great town, which, had it been hidden among the hills, the veriest stranger might have guessed to be near, from that revolting, but sure sign of civilization, a place of execution.

This place was situated on the brow of a hill, beneath a large tamarind-tree. On each side of the tree was a wooden rail, on which were the remains of two human bodies. One of these was nearly entire and exhibited the malefactor in the attitude in which he had been executed. The legs and arms were

stretched out against the rail to the utmost extent; the head had fallen over on the breast, and the appearance of the body showed that death had been inflicted in the fearful manner of the Burmans, namely, by disemboweling. I turned my head away, sickened with the sight.

Naon from his childhood accustomed to such scenes, seeing the expressions of my face, he said—

"The sight is not so agreeable to the sahib as to the inhabitants of yonder town, who must rejoice that these wretches, who were robbers and assassins, and long their terror, have thus become food for the birds."

"Tush, Naon! Their punishment may have been deserved, but their sufferings must have been horrible, and such that none but savages could have inflicted," I replied.

"The death is quick, and the sufferings are less than the ne-pee m'ha l'han thé ('spreading out in the hot sun'), to which the lords of the court are so frequently put."

"That, indeed, must be a terrible punishment," said I.

"It is sahib; worse than being trodden upon by the elephant; for that animal kills, while the minister who undergoes ne-pee m'ha l'han thé is streched upon his back by the public executioners, and thus exposed for many hours, in the hottest part of the day, with a weight upon his breast, more or less heavy, according to the nature of the offence, or at least the king's judgment."

"Surely the offence must be great, even in Burma, to be visited with such a punishment," said I.

"It is not so, sahib," said Naon.

And by way of illustration, he told me that a fire having broken out in the suburbs a few days before he left the capital, which destroyed a great number of houses, and among them that of the widow of the king's favorite minister and tutor, the woman complained to his majesty that during the conflagration, the ministers, whose duty it was to have been present, and especially Kaulen, who was her husband's successor, were not at their posts. The king, who unfortunately happened to be very much out of temper, having listened to the jealous old woman, summoned the ministers before him, and drawing his sword, ordered them one by one to come foward and swear upon it that they were present at the fire and assisted in extinguishing it. Kaulen came foward and declared that, although he had not been present he had gone to the Rung d'hau (Town-hall) to give the necessary instructions upon the occasion.

The king, however, not satisfied with the explanation, ordered Kaulen to be immediately taken out of the audience chamber; when the minister, to avoid being dragged away, according to custom, by the hair of his head, voluntarily made as rapid a retreat as could a man of weakly constitution, and sixty years of age; but speedily he was followed, secured, and given over to the public executioner, who thus saw that the first most faithful and zealous of the great officers of state underwent the punishment of being spread

out in the sun, and that too, not as is customary with prisoners of rank, within the palace enclosure, but in the public road, in view of a multitude of spectators.

"Truly it is a barbarous country, ruled over by more barbarous despots," said I with a feeling of indignation, which, being observed by Mikee, he said,

"Is the noble colar ignorant of the power of the Golden Foot, that he should wonder that his glorious majesty can punish his own slaves?"

"Slaves, Mikee; why, this Kaulen was the first and greatest of his ministers."

"The inhabitants of the earth, kings and ministers, are slaves of the Golden King, who has power of life and death over all."

"Not so; my king is neither a slave or the possessor of slaves," said I, with a foolish warmth; when the good humored hunter, not noticing, but evidently bewildered at the notion of a king without slaves, said—

"If the king of the colars is a great king, it is but reasonable that he can spread out in the sun his chief lords."

Whereupon; picturing to myself the prime minister of England being spread out in St. James's Park for neglecting the duty of a fireman, I should, but for fear of offending the simple hunter, have laughed outright; my reply, however, was rendered needless by Seree, who speaking for the first time came to my rescue, by saying—

"Truly, my brother, I have heard that in the land of these colars the sun never shines." An observation which seemed to increase the astonishment of

Mikee, who, with a shrug of the shoulders, replied gravely—

"It must be a cold country, and———"

But Mikee was interrupted by Naon's calling out that the paper-maker's village was in sight; when, as it was deep into the evening, and we were desirous of landing before the gates should be closed, we silently toiled at the oars until we had run the boat ashore upon the left bank of the river, near a stockaded village, consisting of some twenty huts, which like all the rest I had seen, bore the customary resemblance to large-sized pigeon-houses, in which resided the people whose occupation gave its name to the village; and one family of whom, knowing Mikee, gave us a very hospitable reception and shelter for the night.

I have called this congregation of huts a village of paper-makers; you must not, however, by that picture to yourself any of these large mills for which many districts in England are celebrated; for paper-making, like the rest of the arts, is in a very primitive state among the Burmans, who use three descriptions of that article. The first, and which is the only one *made* in the kingdom, is fabricated from the fibres of the young bamboo, and that, too, by a very rude process, of which Captain Yule, the most recent traveler in Burma, gives the following description:—

"The frame is stretched with the common close woven cotton-cloth of the country, bordered with wooden ledges, to confine the pulp. This is placed in a shallow trough, the pulp being then poured in,

spread over the frame, and rolled with bamboo. It is then lifted slowly, and drained; but the sheet cannot be removed at once, as it is even in the rude Bengalee process. The frame is set for some time to dry in the sun before this is attempted. The material is the fibre of green bamboos: this is macerated in small tanks for some weeks, and then pounded into a coarse pulp. The bamboos are about an inch and a quarter in diameter, are split into shavings about one eighth of an inch in thickness.

"The resulting paper," adds Captain Yule, "is soft; but tough, fibrous, and of unequal thickness; only fit for packing purposes. I am not sure that this is the same paper which, agglutinated into a sort of pasteboard, and covered with a charcoal paste, is doubled into note-books and written on with a pencil. In this form it resembles our school slates rather than writing paper, the writing being easily obliterated. Yet this was almost the only form in which district records appeared to have been kept in Pegu when that province was taken by the English. Writing-paper, properly so called, is not made at all in Burma. Books are written with a style on palm-leaves; as for the few letters written in ink, English or Chinese paper is made use of"

CHAPTER XXII.

I NARROWLY ESCAPE FALLING INTO THE LION'S MOUTH.

So exciting had been my adventures since leaving Rangoon, that the recovery of my father's property —the main object of my journey—had almost passed from my thoughts. It is with shame, however, that I confess I had also forgotten the fate of my only friend, Mr. Johnson; but that night my conscience punished me for my ingratitude, for so much did regret haunt my mind, that, notwithstanding we were lodged as comfortably as at any time since leaving Rangoon, the very effort to sleep became painful, and it was not until daybreak, and I had soothed myself by a resolution to urge the hunter, the next morning, to depart at once, and without any further delay, on the road to Yenang-young, that I closed my aching eyes.

"The sahib has slept long," said Naon, when I awoke.

"Is Mikee ready to leave?" I asked, not seeing the hunter in the room.

"He will not quit the village till to-morrow, sahib."

"Then we will go without him, for we have too long delayed our journey."

"At sundown yesterday it was not possible to

hasten our journey; for boats glide not with the fleetness of the antelope," replied Naon, smiling at the impatience born of the resolution of the night before, and which was still fresh in my memory.

"But why should we lose a day? Where is Mikee?"

"See, sahib; fortune favors us," said he, opening the door of the hut.

There, in the road, to my surprise, I saw a caravan of eighteen covered wagons, to each of which was harnessed six bullocks, and with evidently a long journey before it; for in the rear there was a number of the same animals in readiness to replace those which might fall sick or lame; and by the side of one of the vehicles stood Mikee, in converse with its owner.

"Is this caravan on its way to Yenang-young?" I asked, delighted with the chance of our obtaining a land conveyance. But before Naon could reply, the hunter came up the ladder of the house, caught hold of my arm, and almost dragged me into the room.

"If the colar would not wish to be taken to the Golden City with his arms and legs bound, let him keep within this house," said he.

"Who, then, are these travelers, that we should fear them?" said I.

"A village of people, who, by order of the king, are removing to the mountains near the Golden City."

"But why need *we* fear them?"

"It is the noble colar only who need fear for the people are enraged with his countrymen, who are the

cause of their being driven from the homes of their childhood, and will, if they discover him, take his life; or worse, carry him to the Golden City."

"Then it is not possible for us to journey with this caravan?" I replied with more disappointment than joy at the warning I had received.

"The features of the noble eolar are not those of the Burman; it would therefore be unwise for him to expose them to the multitude," replied Mikee; adding, "but let him await till the caravan is ready to depart, when he can enter a wagon unseen by all but the leader, who, for a few silver coins, has agreed to take Mikee and his three servants to Yenang-young."

At this arrangement I was delighted; for as Naon Seree, and myself would travel in the same wagon with Mikee, as his assistants, not only should we be safe, but by the overland route reach our destination in half the the time it would have taken by water.

That evening the oil-jars and guns were removed by Mikee, Naon, and Seree to the wagon appropriated to our use, and the following morning, by day-break, we were on the road, traveling at the snail's pace of about twelve miles a day, to the sounds of a horrid screeching, caused by the want of cart-grease. As for the freight of the caravan, it was at the same time heavy, cumbersome, delicate and noisy; for not only was there merchandise, but whole families of men, women and children, besides a host of monkeys cats, dogs, and paroquets, each after his own nature adding to the general discord.

Thus for six days did we travel—and with the exception of a village of manufacturers of the deity Guadama, where his godship was to be seen wrought in all materials, and of all sizes, plain and gilded, and at prices adapted to the pockets of all classes of persons—through a swampy country, tall grass, jungle, and forest trees, which, retrospectively, makes our journey by wagon appear to have been almost miraculous.

At sundown the chief of the caravan (who was headman of the village), having chosen a favorable spot, the wagons were drawn into a circle, into which were driven the unharnessed cattle, in order that by the barricade formed by these vehicles, and the fires, which also served to dress our food, the animals were saved from the sudden inroads of the tigers.

Now, as in order to escape being recognised as a European, I had not quitted our wagon for one minute, except at night, the headman was the only one of the villagers who was aware of my existence in the caravan. Of him, however, I soon became suspicious, for on the second night, when the wagons had been drawn up as I have described, it appeared to me rather singular that while the chief tenant of each took his rice or other food to the general fire to warm, and the son of the headman performed the like office for the occupants of his father's vehicle, that the latter personage, although of humble rank, was still a person of consideration, and in command of the whole party, should, not only with his own hands warm some tea, rice, and dress even the for-

bidden buffalo beef, but carry it to one particular wagon.

Indeed, being fully aware of the veneration every Burman has for those above him in rank or place, and the arrogance of every person to those beneath him, an arrogance in which I had seen the headman was not deficient, the circumstance so stimulated my curiosity, that at night, when we lay in the wagon, I said—

"Is it not wonderful, O Mikee, that the headman should condescend to become the hand-servant of one of his people?"

"The eyes of the noble colar are good, for he has seen; but his brain is dull, or he would have known that the headman performed those menial offices for his sick wife."

"Nay, that is not possible, for no Burman waits upon his wife."

"Then a sick son, or daughter, said he.

"It is not so, O Mikee; for the wagon to which the headman went so often, and up the steps of which he crawled with such soft and cat-like steps, is not that which carries his family."

"It is true that the colar's brains are not dull; yet for his own safety it is not wise that he should attempt to discover secrets which do not concern him," and having administered this rebuke, the hunter fell off to sleep.

Although after this reproof I did not again venture to question Mikee, the manner in which it was given —so unusual with the hunter, who had hitherto

treated me with the respect due to superior rank—caused me to keep my eyes and ears open. The consequence was, that I made observations which not only kept my curiosity alive, but somewhat aroused my suspicions.

In the first place, Mikee from that time appeared to me more thoughtful, silent, and restless; moreover, on my look out from the wagon, I saw him on several occasions, in earnest conversation with the headman, and with their eyes directed, and at times fingers pointing to our wagon, as if, I thought, I were the subject of their conversation. Then again—for when suspicion is kindled, the slightest spark will fan it into a flame—I noticed that he moved into one spot, as if to be ready for sudden use, a stack of firearms and ammunition, which had been placed in different parts of the wagon; but whether the weapons were to be used for or against me I was puzzled to discover. In the event, however, of treachery being intended, I deemed it most prudent still to keep my suspicions to myself, and watch narrowly his every action.

Thus, with the sword of fate apparently hanging over me, or rather with my mind steeped in suspicion that some treacherous attempt would be speedily made upon my life or liberty, did I pass the anxious hours until the evening of the sixth day, when the imaginary mine over which I had been brooding exploded in the following manner:—

The headman had brought us to a halt upon a grassy plain, near the skirts of a teak forest; the

evening meal had been prepared and eaten; and the inhabitants of this locomotive village, for the greater part, had sought their sleeping mats. I was alone in the wagon; for Naon, who had not the same motive for hiding from the public gaze, had gone with Mikee and Seree to take his share of duty at the watch-fires.

The night was pitchy dark; there was no moon, and the silence that reigned in the sleeping camp was so deep that my finely-strung nerves could almost feel it, the more so that it was occasionally interrupted by the sudden movements of the bullocks, as the deep, loud voice of a tiger was heard, as if—as doubtless it was—savagely growling at the crackling fire which alone kept it from the rare choice of human and animal food, which its keen scent proclaimed to be awaiting it behind the roaring, sparkling, ascending belt of flames which were being kept alive by my companions.

For some time my thoughts prevented slumber; at length, however, I did sleep, and began to dream of my past, my future, of my cross old grandmother, of my school-days, my lost parents, and my friend Mr. Johnson, who it seemed appeared to me, telling me he had come to rescue me from a great danger; caring but little for his caution, I wept tears of joy to find him alive; then, others of sorrow that I had forgotten him even for a day. Then I thought he became impatient, and chiding me for my folly in not making my escape while I had the opportunity, caught hold of me, and that with so hard a grip, that,

that—well, I awoke, and found Naon tugging at my arm, and whispering, hoarsely—

"Awake, sahib; awake, awake!"

Recognizing the half-caste, and with an instinctive knowledge of some danger being at hand, I sat up, caught him by the hands, and stupidly endeavored to peer through the darkness into his face.

"Lord of heaven, sahib, we are little better than dead!"

"What! have the tigers broken through the barriers?"

"The most savage of them, sahib."

"Bah! you are frightened by shadows;" said I, incredulously.

"It is not so, sahib. The rogue, Carian, has betrayed us."

"Tush! you are jealous of the hunter, Naon."

"Let the sahib listen, and his faith in this rogue will become diminished," said he; adding quickly, but in whispered tones, "when we had heaped upon the fires fuel sufficient for half the night, Mikee told Seree and myself to sleep till he required to be relieved from the first watch, when he would awaken one of us. Glad that he had taken the first hour's watch, I stretched myself before the fires. Seree did likewise. As, however, I could not sleep, I turned my eyes upon the hunter, who sat crouching before the fire, thoughtfully gazing at the flames, as if seeking to discover among them signs of his future fortune. When, however, he thought we were in the land of dreams, the hunter arose upon his feet, and having

looked in every direction, as if to see that no stragglers were near, he crept stealthily away, as I thought to fetch from the wagon his pipe and tobacco; but no, passing onward, he stopped at the headman's wagon, and clapped his hands; whereupon that person came out of the vehicle, and together, they crept softly along to the empty wagon, into which they entered.

"This being sufficient to excite not only my curiosity, but suspicion, that treachery was intended to some person, I crawled to the wagon upon hands and knees, clambered upon one of the wheels, and placing my ear close to the bamboo covering, heard the headman and Mikee; and what surprised me more, another man, in converse together. The last person spoke in tones of authority and command, while the voices of the other two sounded humble and submissive."

"But what did you hear? what did they say?" I asked, impatiently.

"That the sahib and his servant were to be bound in chains, and so taken to the capital."

"Did the hunter say this?"

"No, sahib; the rascal said it would be better that you should be enticed there, as we are now going without having any suspicion that you were a prisoner."

"The rascal!" I exclaimed, jumping upon my feet.

"Stay, sahib; you have not heard all," said Naon; adding, "to this, the person whose voice I did not recognise replied angrily, even threatening the hun-

ter with death if he did not aid the headman in securing your person."

"What said he in reply?"

"Complied, sahib; when my curiosity as to who this person could be whose authority seemed to terrify the headman as well as Mikee, was gratified by a gleam of light twinkling through an aperture in the cloth covering of the roof. It was through one of the folds; I removed it, and then, by the glimmer of the oil-lamp, I saw Mikee and the headman crouching at the feet of a man, the sight of whom, although lying wounded and bandaged upon a heap of mats, made my limbs tremble and my head so dizzy that it was a miracle I did not fall forward among the precious three. It was, sahib—it is, sahib–" and, putting his lips to my ear, he whispered—"the Maha Silwa."

And at the sound of the name of that terrible general I started as if I had suddenly trodden upon a rattle-snake. I however, recovered my self-possession when Naon said—

"We must prepare, sahib, for we know not how soon these rogues may make their attempt."

"What is the use of preparation? How can we defend ourselves against a whole village?" said I.

"For some reason, I know not what, but I distinctly made out that they dare not let the villagers know of this plot against us, and therefore it will be attempted alone by the headman and Mikee."

Then we will arouse the whole camp," said I.

"Not so, sahib: that would be to be torn to pieces

by a multitude, instead of a single savage; for these people, still smarting at having been turned out of their homes by the English troops, would sacrifice us upon the instant.

For the moment I felt aghast; there was the choice of two evils before me; to permit myself quietly to be taken to Ava in chains, as many of my fellow Europeans had been; or by arousing the people, seek an immediate death. Naon was in favor of the former.

"I shall do neither," said I, resolutely.

"Truly we are in the hands of Providence," replied Naon.

"Providence ever helps those who help themselves," said I, laying my hand upon a hatchet near me; adding, "now let us await the coming of these rogues, and defend ourselves as best we may."

"It is not wise, sahib; the whole camp will be aroused."

"Will you resign yourself like a coward, or is it that you are one of the rogues?" said I, angrily.

"The sahib is unjust. Let him remember that the hunter may return alone to await the coming of the headman; and if so—"

"Bravo, Naon; your plan is the best; we can seize the rogue as he enters, and tie his hands and feet with his own cords."

"True, sahib, and then make our way through the barrier."

"Yes, yes, and risk the tigers rather than these

human savages," said I; adding, "but now let us prepare."

In another instant we were crouching in the wagon; I upon my hands and breast, with my head halfway out of the vehicle, watching the approach of the enemy. It was pitchy dark, and I could distinguish nothing but the sounds of footsteps. That was enough; my indignation was so great that my fingers moved involuntarily, as if clutching the throat of my enemy.

The footsteps grew nearer; they were upon the ladder; they had entered the vehicle; and almost at the same moment the treacherous hunter, gagged by Naon, who had thrown a cloth over his head, lay upon the floor, with his legs secured by me; as for his arms, they were also secured by Naon.

"Thou vilest of ungrateful rogues; attempt to utter one word, and the next instant is your last," said I, although the caution was useless, for Naon had thrust the end of the cloth into his mouth.

So far our movements had been well planned and quickly executed. The next object was to see the gag was so fixed that he could not remove it, and his arms and legs made *en suite*, and this would have been speedily effected, but suddenly we heard other footsteps upon the ladder. Thinking them to be those of the headman, we arose, seized our hatchets, for Naon had been similarly armed to myself from the heap I have mentioned that Mikee had placed aside, when, imagine our consternation at seeing, by the light of a small torch he held in his hand, not the

headman, but Mikee himself, and who with that wonderful quickness exhibited by men whose lives have been passed in the midst of danger and intrigue, comprehending the situation, said, as he entered the doorway—

"Are the colars mad? Do they seek their own destruction?"

"Thou rogue and villain! we will die with our weapons in our hands rather than be betrayed into the hands of the Maha," I said; strangely, however, at the same time, with a flash of hope that seeing might not have been believing, and that Mikee was innocent.

"The Maha. Hush!" said the hunter, putting his fingers to his lips to betoken silence; then adding, "the colars have been dreaming. Seree and Mikee are here to help them to escape. Let them release Seree and follow, or in another hour they will be in the power of him they fear."

I know not why, whether it is that I am by nature unsuspicious, or that my faith in Mikee had been deeper than I suspected—this, however, I do know, and I remember it with astonishment, that in an instant my faith in the hunter returned, and releasing Seree, we were ready to follow the moment after the words had left his lips.

"Each take what he can carry," said Mikee.

And snatching up my rifle, hatchet, and bag of ammunition, Seree and Naon doing likewise, we followed the hunter, imitating his cat-like walk, till we came to a wagon not very far from the empty vehicle

from wherein Naon had been so much frightened. Creeping beneath this, we found the fire at that point half burned down; so hastily brushing through the expiring flames, we were soon amidst the long grass, which prevented the sounds of our footsteps being heard, and on our road to the wood. Once, however, in the forest, we kept close to each other till we came to one immense tree, where, for safety from the tigers, we clambered among its leafy branches, and there awaited daylight.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MIKEE PROVES HIMSELF A GOOD JUDGE OF ELEPHANTS.

At daybreak, when from the branch upon which Naon and myself were perched, we had the satisfaction of seeing the distant caravan on the move, I really felt much ashamed at having suspected of dishonesty the man who had performed for us such a great service; and vexed with myself, like many people I have known in a similar position, I sought to make another my scapegoat; so, addressing the half-caste, I said—

"Truly thou deservest to be sold into slavery for the rest of thy days, for having charged our brave and faithful friend with so great a crime."

"That I have eaten dirt, sahib, is true, for the hunter has rescued us from worse than death; yet is it also true that thy servant's ears were not deceived, therefore must Naon be a dog without understanding," replied the half-caste in so humble a tone, that but for his evident mystification, which was really pitiable, I should have laughed.

When, however, the next minute we had all descended from the tree, Mikee, who had heard our conversation with his usual stoicism or generosity, relieved our shamefacedness.

"The colars," said he, "are not cats, that they can see in the dark, and their eyeballs are too straight to follow the bendings of crooked ways; therefore, that they might not endanger their own safety by some unwise action, the good Nats kept them in ignorance of the means being used for their good."

"You are too generous, my brave Mikee, for we were ungrateful, and doubted your honesty; but then," I added, "you will pardon us this time."

And so saying, I shook his hand warmly, an action, the full meaning of which nothing but my words and manner enabled him to comprehend, and which was evidently so strange to him that when his fingers were relieved from my grip, he shook them as a cat does her wet paw, probably to shake them back again into their natural form.

"Then, making a similar apology to Seree, who accepted it with equal good humor, and having taken a survey of the property brought from the caravan, which consisted of three muskets, my rifle, a bag of ammunition, and another of rice, both of which had been thoughtfully secured by Seree, I said—

"A small supply of food, if our journey is to be long."

"Before yettee (noon) we shall reach Tharet, where the friends of Mikee will be made welcome," said the hunter.

This was cheering news; and so, after having made a meal of dry rice and honey, which we found dripping from a young bamboo-tree from the comb of some wild bees, and water from a small stream

scooped up with our hands, we loaded our pieces and proceeded upon our tramp through the forest, keeping close together with our fingers upon the triggers, ready to give a royal salute to any tiger which might cross our path. And then Mikee related the causes which led to the adventure of the previous night.

"The noble colar," said the hunter, will be pleased to be told that at the time when the fierce Maha Silwa was expected at the Carian village, he had unexpectedly met with a portion of the army of the rebel colars (English), with whom, never doubting that they would fly from his brave warriors as dust before the wind, he fought a battle; but the Nats, to punish him for his oppression of the poor, and his many cruelties, willed that he himself should be severely wounded, and his whole army destroyed by the enemy. The news of this disgraceful defeat reaching the commander-in-chief, the great Bandoola, that general immediately sent one of his officers with an order to put the Maha to death. The Nats, however, for their own inscrutable ends, sometimes even favor the wicked. Thus, it so happened that the officer sent to put the chief to death being one of his own secret friends, managed to delay his journey until a private messenger of his own should have given information of his coming, and its purport, to the Maha, who no sooner received the intelligence than, wounded as he was, by the aid of one of his slaves, he fled in the night disguised like a private soldier to the house of the headman of the village, which was then, by order of the king, preparing to migrate to-

ward the capital. This headman, knowing the Maha to be a great favorite of the Golden King, and expecting that he would be restored to his honors upon his arrival at court, provided the chief with a wagon, and that too, unknown to the villagers, who then, as even now, believe it to be occupied by a sick person. Thus secretly did he travel, cursing by night and by day the colars who had been the cause of his fall, and consoling himself with the hope that he might yet be saved by the king, upon whose mercy and friendship he relied. As for ourselves, when the caravan reached the village of papermakers, I bargained with the headman, who, for a sum of silver—which was not too plentiful with him—readily agreed to convey myself and three servants to Yenang-young. And thus we should have reached that town in safety, had not the noble colar shown himself at the door of the hut."

"Did he, then, so soon recognize me to be a European?" said I, with surprise.

"At once, and would have given you over to the hatred of the people; but fearing I should not pay him the silver, he determined to await our arrival at Yenang-young."

"But," said I, "he intended to have seized me last night?"

"It was so; for, thinking to ingratiate himself the more with the Maha, he told the chief that a disguised European was in the cavern; when the latter, believing that by taking you to Ava in chains, his chance of the king's pardon would be the greater;

moreover, famishing for revenge upon one of his hated enemies, and fearing the possibility of your escape during the journey, he commanded the headman to seize you immediately. The latter, however, not wishing to lose the whole of the money I had agreed to pay him, came to me and offered to give up one-half if I would help to bind you without the knowledge of the villagers; to which, that dust might be thrown in his eyes, I agreed. Whereupon, believing thy servant to be as great a rogue as himself, he led me into the wagon, and, to my surprise, before the Maha, who, addressing me, said—

"The worthy headman has said that the Carian is faithful to the Golden Foot, and has promised to secure the person of the dog of a rebel whom he has enticed into our power."

"The words of the headman are those of truth, O mighty praw," was all that thy servant could reply; but the savage eyes of the chief brightened as he said—

"If this thing be done well, and the faithful Carian can bind this dog hand and foot, and place a gag in his mouth so that the people of the caravan may not become aroused, and in their hatred rob us of our prey, and the colar is carried to the Golden City, great shall be his reward."

"My heart was consuming with indignation, but I replied, 'This thing shall be done, O great praw.'"

"That was to falsify thyself, O Mikee," said I, interrupting him.

"It was the act of a coward, but then the bravest

warrior could not otherwise have saved the liberty of the noble colar," replied the hunter; adding, "but to throw dust in the eyes of the Maha, and gain time, I begged that, as the night was so far advanced, and the people might become aroused by thy cries, it would be better to postpone the seizure till the following night. Fortunately, the chief agreed; so losing no time, I awakened Seree, and sent him to warn and prepare you for immediate departure. The rest is known to the noble colar."

"Yet must you long have suspected that treachery was intended, or why didst thou so artfully place the muskets, ammunition and rice, that they might be ready on the instant?"

"The wise hunter prepares for every chance; yet, although thy servant did suspect treachery, he thought it unwise to endanger thy safety by breaking silence."

"Your conduct has indeed been noble, brave, and generous, O Mikee."

"Truly, the hunter is all that the sahib says; and it is to be regretted he will lose his oil-jars," said Naon, evidently pleased that I had left him something to say by which he could show his sympathy with the hunter.

"Psha, Naon! these can be easily replaced," said I, vexed at the matter-of-fact manner of the half-caste.

"We had now reached a part of the forest upon which the elements during the recent rains seemed—at least so I then thought—to have spent their fury,

for trees were lying about in all directions with their branches broken, and bespattered with clayey mud. But what appeared to me as remarkable was the soil itself, which was indented with holes as far as the clearing extended.

As, while approaching this spot, Mikee had been relating the over-night's adventures, he had not observed these queer indents; suddenly, however, when he observed them, with an exclamation of joy he ran forward, gazed around, fell upon his knees and began a minute examination of several of the impressions, which lasted at least five minutes, when seeming satisfied, he arose, and clutching my arm, said—

"Guadama be praised. It is in this forest that the Nats will bestow fortune upon Mikee."

"Truly the brave hunter must have hit upon a gold or ruby mine that he is so happy," said Naon.

"Is this so?" I asked, for I knew that both gold and rubies in abundance were to be found in Burma.

"Truly it *is* not only a mine of gold, but a fountain of honor, for these are the foot-prints of a herd."

"Of a herd of what?—elephants?" I asked, with a laugh.

"The noble colar says truly. A large herd is at hand; it has been here during the night. See those broken trees; they were thrown down by the animals;" and with a fidelity of detail that at the time astonished me, he named the number, size, and even the height of the beasts; adding in a tremulous whis-

per, "and among them, O colar, perhaps the celestial beast whom the holy Brahmin has promised Mikee it shall be his fortune to reveal to the world."

"Naon, however, who was not by any means equally delighted at being in the proximity of a herd of wild elephants, and whose eyes had lighted upon an object that better pleased him, said—

"See those houses on yonder hill; surely we must be near the village of Tharet."

"Thy words are those of a prophet; it is Tharet; Let us hasten, that we may be the first to warn the people that the elephants are near their rice-fields," said Mikee; adding, "and, moreover, where the attendant of the noble colar may hide in peace, for truly he prefers the town to the woods.

"The beasts are made for the wilds, and men for the town," replied Naon sullenly.

"Or the towns for men, Naon," said I, laughing.

And we hastened onward, the half-caste in sullen silence, Mikee pondering upon his probable good fortune, and I upon the confidence with which the hunter had described with an appearance of accuracy the size and height of animals from their foot-prints alone; and which seemed to me to be about as reasonable as to judge of a house by a single brick. I was, however, then ignorant of a fact which, since that time, has been related by Lieutenant de Batts, who, in his "Rambles in Ceylon," tells us—

"After heavy rains, the track of these herds is easily detected by the impressions of their feet on the soft clay. Some of the natives evince considerable saga-

city in immediately discovering the least vestige of the foot-print of an elephant. From the most trifling marks they can confidently state the number; and what appears still more extraordinary, the size of the elephants composing the herd. The secret of this last discovery consists in the anatomical fact that twice the circumference of an elephant's foot is exactly equal to its greatest height, measuring from the fore-foot to the point that corresponds with the withers of a horse. By long practice and perfect acquaintance with the formation of the foot of the animal, the most expert native huntsmen can, by closely examining even a small section of the impression that it leaves, calculate its height, and nearly approximate to the truth."

Near as Tharet had appeared to Naon, we were two hours before we reached even the fields of rice-sugar-canes, and plantains by which it was surrounded. Then the tramp through these fields, for the greater part under water, rendered our journey so toilsome that it was near sundown when we arrived at the village itself.

Observing, however, before we entered the gates, several structures that were new to me—that is small boxes made of bamboo raised from the ground a height of at least fourteen feet, and erected not only near Tharet, but at intervals for miles along the flat country—I said—

"Surely these are places of observation from which the learned study the wonders of the heavens?"

"Can the noble colar be ignorant that they are the stations from whence, in safety from tigers, the farmers watch, and alarm the elephants which sometimes in a single night tread down a whole harvest?" said Mikee.

But how is it possible that the farmers can arrest the inroads of a herd of such formidable animals?" I asked.

"Each watchman is provided with a rattle, which, upon the first approach of a herd, he springs, and this signal, passing from station to station, there arises such a clattering of rattles and shouting of voices, that the beasts become scared, and, if not famishing with hunger, retire back to the woods."

"But," said I, is it possible that a herd of elephants can be frightened away by a trumpery noise?"

"Yes, for noises are disagreeable to them; yet, sometimes, when enraged, in defiance of all, the males will advance upon the villages, overturn the houses, and kill all who come in their way. This, however, can only occur when the people omit to light up a line of fire; for so fearful are the animals of that element, that a few lighted wisps of straw or dried grass will invariably stop their progress."

"But at present these watch-towers are untenanted; neither does there appear to be any preparation for the fires," said I.

"The season (for it is only when the crops are nearly ready for gathering, and the swamps and marshes caused by the rains have become lessened,

that the elephants make these inroads) is not sufficiently advanced, and the people of Tharet at present know not their danger.

"Then, Mikee, let us hasten forward and warn them that a herd is within a few miles of their crops, that they may be prepared with their watch-fires and rattles," said I.

"The heart of the noble colar is generous, and his words good," he replied.

And shortly afterward we entered the village, which consisted of the usual kind of pigeon-house huts, pagodas, and a small kioum or monastery—a building which served the double purpose of a residence for the priests and a school-house for the children of the inhabitants, for in the Burman monasteries, as in those of Europe in the Middle Ages, the children receive their education; and, remarkable for a country where the gradations of rank are observed with such cruel rigor, the children, those alike of the greatest nobles and the meanest peasants, are educated at the same time, beneath the same roof, and by the same masters—the priests.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HERD OF WILD ELEPHANTS.

As Mikee had promised, not only were we warmly welcomed by the villagers of Tharet, but at once conducted to the house of the headman, who, being a relative of the hunter, lost no time in placing before us the best viands the village afforded ; and of which, after our toilsome journey, I am not ashamed to say we made a hearty meal.

"Has the brave Mikee heard the news of the rebels who are invading the soil of the Golden King," said the headman.

"The Nats are angered, for they have permitted the rebels to destroy the Maha Silwa's army," was the reply.

"That is true, but the Bandoola has sent to the Golden City for the Nat-Kadau, who will drive them into the sea," said the headman.

But Mikee, probably for my sake, not wishing the conversation to take so awkward a turn, pretended to be too much engaged in satisfying his appetite to reply. So, while he is finishing his meal, I will relate to you an anecdote about these wonderful Nat-Kadau, which will afford a curious specimen of the cruelty and superstition of the Burmese and their government.

When the government found that notwithstanding all their efforts, they were unable to make head against the English invaders, they had recourse to magic; and among the projects of this nature, sent down to their army all the women who had the reputation of having a familiar spirit, in order to put a spell on the foreigners, and, as it was said, *unman* them.

These females, who rather labor under some mental derangement than are impostors, are called by the Burmans Nat-Kadau, or female Nats. They profess to hold intercourse with the demi-gods, and to be inspired by them with supernatural powers. "The presence of such persons," says a British officer, "was well known to our army; indeed, after one battle, a young girl of fifteen years of age was found dressed in male attire. As soon as her sex was recognised, great attention was paid to her, but she soon expired from the wounds which she had received in her head and neck."

When Mikee had concluded his meal, he arose, saying—

"May the crops of my worthy relative yield him an abundant harvest."

"Telakien is not ungrateful for the prayer of the brave Mikee. The Nats are pleased with the people of Tharet, for the harvest promises to be plentiful," replied the headman.

"Yet, although the Nats are beneficent, and the season is approaching when the ponderous foot of the wild elephant may deprive his people of their

food, my worthy relative is not prudent, for he permits the night to find his watch-towers unmanned, and his alarm-fires unlighted," said Mikee, thinking thereby to soften down news the disclosure of which he anticipated would fall upon his relative with the alarm of a sixty-four pound shot in the midst of a Quakers' meeting.

Great, however, was the hunter's surprise, when the headman replied—

"Is it, then, because Mikee is brave and keen-sighted that the people of Tharet are blind? No this thing is not; for they have discovered a herd of wild elephants in the forest to the east of Tharet."

"If this be as my worthy relative says, how is it possible that he has not prepared his watchmen and his fires? For the elephant gives no warning of its approach to the crops of the villagers," said Mikee.

"Truly, neither will be necessary, for the hunters of the Golden King are even now preparing to encompass the jungle," said Telakien.

"If my relative's words are true, then are the hopes and fortunes of Mikee broken like a tree in a wind-storm," replied the hunter, chopfallen that the discovery of the herd had been made by others.

"This thing cannot be, O Mikee, for although thou art so humble, the hunters of the Golden King value thy aid alone as equal with that of the whole people of Tharet," replied the headman.

"It pleases the worthy Telakien to pour sweet words into the ears of his relative, but will he say when the people of Tharet will join the hunters of

the Golden King?" said Mikee, his great dark eyes now flashing with delight.

"Before the sun next rises in the heavens," replied Telakien.

"Then is it necessary we should at once seek to refresh ourselves with sleep, for Mikee would not be the last to arrive at the keddah," replied the hunter, there and then stretching himself upon a mat; when, as if sleep were at his instantaneous command—as, indeed, I have known it to be with one or two persons—he gave us nasal proof of the soundness of his slumber.

I endeavored to follow his example, but for some time Naon kept me awake by reminding me of my resolution, and urging me to let Mikee proceed to the hunt alone, and so journey onward by ourselves to Yenang-young.

"What!" I exclaimed, "lose the hunt! No, no, Naon; the catching of a herd of elephants is not a sight to be often witnessed by a European, so I for one will not miss the opportunity."

And with this determination I at length fell asleep.

The next morning we arose with the sun, yet not before the people of the village, some two hundred of whom were in readiness to start, and prepared with a plentiful supply of food, cooking utensils, fuel rattles, and tom-toms. Mikee, who was full of spirits, and, moreover, seemed to be a popular person among the people, joined the headman in taking the lead; and thus, in a kind of methodical disorder, we marched for seven miles, stopping, however, at several

villages in our way for reinforcements; which, with, the people of Tharet, the professional hunters and their assistants, whom we found upon the outskirts of the immense jungle, swelled our numbers to rather more than five hundred.

Now, as this expedition lasted ten days, and the operations of the party extended over a space as large as a battle-field, it was as impossible for me to be an eye-witness of every incident that happened, as for an individual soldier to witness the multifarious events of a great military conflict; therefore, rather as the general who may view the whole from an eminence, than the individual hunter, will I endeavor to describe the scene.

The operations took place in an immense jungle where the elephants had been discovered feeding. The herd consisted of thirty; and the first operation was to surround the animals at a great distance, yet so that they should be in ignorance of our presence; which was done after the following manner:—

First, the whole body of hunters were divided into parties of three, called chokeys, that is, one mahote, or trained elephant-driver, and two assistants. These chokeys being stationed about twenty yards from each other, encircled the jungle; then each chokey lighted a fire, and cleared away the tall cane or brush-wood between its own and the next station, so as to form a path of communication throughout the first circle, which, you must remember, is called the dawkee. This dawkee being formed, the remaining part of the day and succeeding night was occupied in keep-

ing watch and cooking the food, so as to be ready for immediate use.

Early the next morning, a man was detached from each chokey, so as to form a second circle that would touch the first at the section nearest to the forest which the jungle skirted, and from which the animals had advanced. The men at the points where the two circles touched, then extinguished their fires and filed off to the right, in order to leave an opening through which the herd might be frightened into the dawkee, or rather one end of an oblong, for into that figure the two broken circles had become formed.

Then the sport commenced by the people of the dawkee keeping up such a clattering noise with their rattles and tom-toms that the alarmed herd—to whom the men, being hidden by the jungle and long grass, were invisible—ran from side to side; but meeting with the same noise, at length, for the sake of peace and quietness, advanced into the new circle, the opening of which was then closed up by the men, who immediately stationed themselves as before in parties lighted their fires, and so ended the second day.

The third day the same noise was made, but the herd, feeding as it went along upon branches of trees and leaves of bamboo, seemed to suspect the presence of its numerous but concealed enemies; still in terror of the fires which were now kept blazing in every direction (that the animals might be kept in the middle), they at length, as if pestered beyond all endurance at the incessant clattering, advanced toward the keddah or place where they were to be secured.

The keddah consists of three enclosures communicating with each other by narrow gateways. The outer enclosure, or baigeote, where the elephants are to enter, is the largest; the middle one, or doobraye, is the next in size; and the third, or rajecote, is the smallest. These enclosures are formed by a deep ditch on the inner side, the bank of earth thrown up by the excavation being planted with a strong palisading of thick trees, strengthened by cross bars, and supported by buttresses, which are sunk in the earth. In the third, or furthermost of these enclosures, the elephants are kept six days, where they are regularly, though scantily, fed from a scaffold on the outer side, close to the entrance of an outlet called the romee, which is about sixty feet long, and purposely so narrow that the animals can only be taken out one by one.

On the night of the third day we were awakened by an alarm that the elephants were advancing toward the chokeys; the fires, however, being replenished with green bamboos, set up such a blaze and crackling, together with the clattering of tom-toms and rattles, and the firing of blank-cartridge, that the astonished elephants not only retired to the centre of the jungle, but advanced toward the baigcote, or entrance of the first enclosure of the keddah. Further, however, than the entrance they did not advance that night.

The next day we still found the elephants *at*, not within the enclosure. The palmai, or leader of the

herd, evidently had a suspicion that all was not right, for she walked backward and forward, eating as she went, and followed by the whole of the others, who seemed quite contented to remain where they were. Then came another hurricane of noises, and before night the beasts had entered the first enclosure of the keddah, which was immediately barricaded by a great fire, so that they could not return.

The next object being to get the beasts into the doobraye, or enclosure Number 2, the whole party entered the baigcote, filing off to the right and left, so as to surround them at all points but the entrance to the doobraye, set light to a circle of fuel, and then began to create a terrible din and fire blank cartridges. This had the desired effect, for the startled elephants turned from their grazing and looked toward the forest, as if with a notion of escape; but finding fires upon every side except at the entrance of the next enclosure, the palmai or leader, after some time spent in a suspicious examination of the gateway, passed within, and was, as usual, followed immediately by her docile tribe.

The following day the same means were taken to force the animals within the third enclosure, or rajecote, and with the same success. But then finding themselves again surrounded, in a smaller space, and with no outlet whatever, they seemed at once to comprehend that they had been entrapped, and becoming desperately enraged, advanced to the ditch which surrounded the enclosure, screaming and bel-

lowing terrifically, and by inflating their trunks, and lifting them in the air, endeavored to break down the palisading. At every point, however, to which they advanced, they were met by fires and loud noises; by which means, being driven back, they had recourse to the water in the ditch, with which they refreshed themselves by sucking it up into their trunks and then squirting it over every part of their bodies. After this operation, they withdrew to the middle of the enclosure, there to meditate upon their means of escape. The hunters, however, having succeeded into getting them in the third enclosure, immediately began to build huts and form a kind of encampment around, close to the palisades, and to place watchmen at every point to prevent them from breaking through.

Thus for four days were the elephants left to recover their temper. Upon the fifth, the door of the *romee*, or narrow passage leading from the small and last enclosure was opened, and one of the animals enticed to enter by a mahote, who threw just before its trunk, and then further within the romee, until the beast had advanced within the passage which was too narrow for him to turn in, some sugar-canes; and having once passed the gateway, the door was instantly shut and secured by throwing across each other two bars that stood perpendicularly on each side, the noise of which made the elephant suspicious, and so endeavor to retreat; but finding the gate closed, he screamed fearfully, and repeatedly ran against the bars with the force of a battering-ram,

till, becoming convinced that that means of escape was useless, he arose and leaped upon the bars with his fore-feet, in order to break them down by sheer force of weight; and so he continued these efforts till obliged to desist from mere fatigue.

While the beast was making these efforts, the hunters placed strong ropes with running nooses at the outlet of the romee; into one of which, as he endeavored to make his escape, the elephant put his feet, when it was immediately drawn tight and fastened to the palisades. His feet having been made fast, two men placed heavy bars across the romee, between themselves and the elephant, to prevent his kicking, and by that means tied his hind-legs together, passing a cord, the noose of which was formed like the figure 8, alternately from the one to the other. Then, while others were engaged in artfully throwing cables around his neck and body, another party stood upon the outside of the palisades endeavoring to divert his attention with plantain leaves, sugar-canes, and by playing with his proboscis.

When the whole apparatus of ropes was properly prepared, the ends of those which were around his neck were brought forward to the end of the romee, and made fast to two koomkees, or female elephants, trained for the purpose; the door at the end of the outlet was opened, and the passage left clear; the ropes tied to the palisades were loosened, and the beast—by dint of the gentle pulling of the two females, long poles sharpened at the ends, and another

hurricane of noises—was made to advance till he had cleared the romee, when his conductors separated; so that, if he attempted to go to one side he would have been prevented by that pulled in the opposite direction, and *vice versa*.

It was curious, also, to watch the sagacity of these conductors; for when the captive elephant grew obstinate, and would lie down, one of them would put her snout under and raise him upward, supporting, him on her knees; and with her head push him forward with all her strength, while the hunters assisted by goading and urging the animal forward by their noises.

Such were the means by which the larger beasts of the herd were secured. In conducting, however, the smaller elephants from the romee, only one cable and one koomkee, or female elephant was used. As soon as the small elephant was secured by the ropes he was left in charge of a mahote, or keeper, and two assistants, in order to supply food and water till he became so tractable as to feed himself.

These men erected a small hut immediately before the elephant, constantly soothing, caressing, and supplying him with food; sometimes, indeed, threatening, or goading the animal with an iron-pointed stick; but more generally coaxing him by scratching his head and trunk with a long bamboo, split at one end in to many pieces, and driving away the flies from any sores that had been occasioned by his efforts to escape from the romee upon the first shutting up of the gates, which are not unfrequent, as, although the

elephant is large and powerful, its skin is so soft and sensitive that it is more easily pierced than that of smaller creatures.

The mahote, moreover, keeps the elephant cool by squirting water over it; taking care, however, to stand a good distance from its trunk. By these means the disposition of the animal becomes so tame, that in a few days the man advances cautiously to his side, and strokes and pats him with his hand, speaking in a soothing tone of voice, till the elephant, beginning to know his keeper, obeys his commands. By these means the mahote at length becomes on sufficiently familiar terms with him to get upon his back from the koomkee.

While they are training in this manner, the tame elephants lead out the others in turn, for the sake of exercise, and likewise to ease their legs from the cords with which they are bound. Thus, in a few weeks, the animal becomes so obedient to his keeper that his fetters are removed, and in five or six months suffers himself to be conducted by the mahote from one place to another; but care is taken not to let him approach his former haunts, lest it should induce him to attempt the recovery of his liberty.

The obedience of the elephant to his conductor seems partly to proceed from a sense of generosity, as it is in some measure voluntary; for when suddenly alarmed, or determined to run away, all the exertions of the mahote cannot stop him, even by beating, or digging into his head the pointed iron hook by which the latter directs him; indeed the animal

totally disregards these feeble efforts, otherwise he could shake or pull him off with his trunk.

"Accidents," says Mr. Cary, the writer to whom I am indebted for this description of elephant taming, "of this kind happen almost every year, especially to those mahotes who attend the large goondahs (male elephants); but they are in general owing to their own carelessness. It is necessary to treat the males with greater severity than the females to keep them

CHAPTER XXV.

WE CATCH A LORD WHITE ELEPHANT.

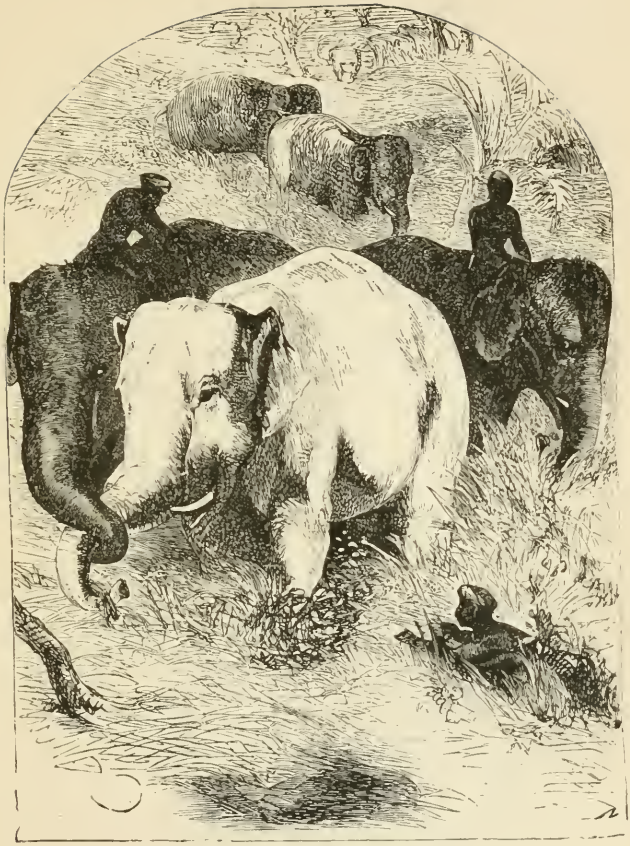
When the herd had been secured in the keddah, the people of Tharet, and most of the other villagers who had acted as assistants, received their rewards, and set out on their march homeward, leaving to the professional hunters of the Golden King the duty of passing them, one by one, through the Romee, and taming them prior to their being distributed among the various royal elephant depots.

Not so, however, Mikee, who, when taken before the chief of the royal hunters, said—

"The Carian requires not the reward of a slave, for he has not yet performed the duty assigned to him by the Nats."

"Surely the Carian must be possessed with an obstinate Beloo, who would deprive him of his fair share of the flowered silver, for truly it is known to all that his merits are great," replied the chief, with astonishment, at finding that a man existed who could refuse money honestly earned.

"The prize of the herd, which the Nats themselves have assigned to the Carian, has escaped, therefore will he receive no silver, but hide his head in the dust till it has been recovered," said Mikee.



THE LORD WHITE ELEPHANT.

Frontispiece.] Page 302.

"Truly, friend, the Beloo must have possession of thee, for have we not secured, without dangerous hurt to one, a whole herd of the noblest elephants of Pegu?" said the chief.

"Of noble beasts, truly, O worthy chief; yet has the mightiest elephant of the forest to be taken," said Mikee.

"Surely it must be that the son of my father has lost his understanding, for the words of the worthy hunter are to him as the rubies of an undiscovered mine," replied the now much mystified leader."

"The chief has said that the services of his servant are deserving of reward," said Mikee.

"Thy services were great, therefore it is unreasonable that thou shouldest receive no reward."

"The only reward then, O chief, that thy servant seeks, is the loan of thy four koomkees (female elephants)."

"The loan of the koomkees!" repeated the chief, with astonishment at the request.

"Truly, the koomkees; for a sacred lord White Elephant now awaits to be taken to the Golden Palace."

"Surely the man is either favored by the Nats or possessed with many Beloos," replied the chief now more astonished than ever.

When, however, Mikee repeated the story of the Brahmin, and the prophecy, moreover, that at the commencement of the hunt, before the cordon of men had been effectually placed around the jungle, he had seen two goondahs (males), one of which

was white, retreat backward from the herd into the forest, the chief, as superstitious as the rest of his countrymen, fell upon the ground, saying—

"Thy request is granted, O noble hunter; for it would be impious to refuse the request of one to whom the Nats have shown so much favor, and who will speedily receive a robe of state, titles, and the tslao (cord of nobility) from the hand of the Golden Foot; for it is said that the sacred beast which has so long inhabited the Golden Palace is even now languishing at the point of death, surrounded by physicians who know not how to cure, and his great officers, who find it difficult to console the sacred animal;" and the chief immediately left to prepare the koomkees and their mahotes.

"Thine own imagination has deceived thee, O Mikee," I said, when he had repeated to me what had passed between himself and the chief.

"It is not so; the sacred beast even now awaits those who will conduct him to his palace," replied Mikee, warmly; adding, "but will the noble colar dare to join in the hunt?"

"That will I," was my hearty reply, notwithstanding the cloud upon the countenance of Naon, who stood shrugging his shoulders, in evident disgust at the probability of another hunt.

Then, as soon as the four koomkees and their mahotes and attendants were ready, Mikee, heading the party as a mahote himself, and upon the largest of the trained beasts, led the party till we reached that portion of the forest-jungle—for it partook of

both—where he had calculated to find the feeding-ground of the white elephant.

At night the goondahs, or large male elephants, came out singly, or in small parties to feed; thus, to watch them, while the koomkees, tied to trees, and the mahotes resting upon mats near them, the whole party being surrounded by a circle of lighted bamboos, Mikee and myself arranged to keep on the look-out alternate hours, from a small shed erected upon poles, and which had been brought for the purpose.

As the day broke, we heard a strange rustling noise.

"It is a goondah, a white goondah; the fortunate hour has arrived, exclaimed Mikee; and then rising to my feet, sure enough I saw, at a distance of a few hundred yards, a noble elephant engaged, at his breakfast I suppose, for he was leisurely eating young branches, which he kept pulling from the trees, the cleaning of which, by whisking and striking them against its fore legs, had occasioned the noise that had aroused me, and had given Mikee so much delight; moreover, it really was an albino, or white elephant; that is, totally unlike any other I had seen. It was of a light mahogany color, and sufficiently contrasting to the common elephant to merit the name of white.

The animal, once discovered, no time was to be lost; so we both descended from the box, and having given the alarm to the rest of the party, under Mikee's direction we began the attack.

Mikee, acting as a mahote, ascended the neck of one of the koomkees by means of a cord hung around the animal for the purpose. Three other mahotes followed his example, upon their respective elephants, myself upon the last, with its mahote. As for Naon and Seree, they remained behind with the assistants. Then, when we had so lain ourselves forward upon the neck of the koomkee, as not to be seen by the wild animal we were about to catch, and the necessary ropes were ready in our hands, Mikee gave the signal, and the well-trained koomkees, directed by the mahotes, proceeded to entrap their brother of the wilds. This they did by taking upon themselves the character of untamed animals, a character they sustained by leisurely advancing, grazing their way as they went, until they had encompassed the goondah ; then, finding the latter took no notice of them, not distinguishing them from the wild animals, whom perhaps he had not long since left behind him in the forest, they formed together closer, till his two sides were pressed, and his head and hind quarters rubbed by the four decoys. That was an anxious moment for the hunter, for not unfrequently, if in a bad humor, the wild animal will at once furiously attack his tamed sisters.

Fortunately it was not so then; for so warmly and affectionately did the koomkees caress the animal, and so good-humoredly did he receive and return them, that it neither saw nor heard the mahotes' assistants crawl beneath the belly of the koomkee, which had placed herself across his hind-quarters, and

from thence throw ropes, the nooses of which, as I have said, were of the figure of 8, just beneath his hind feet; and when he stepped within the figure, and the ropes were drawn rather tight, the koomkees were moved forward, of course followed by the white animal, from whose hind legs the long ropes trailed along the ground.

Feeling the tightness of the ropes around his legs increase as he moved forward, he stopped for a moment as if suspecting something wrong; then, as if convinced, he retreated toward the thick jungle.

The mahote upon the koomkee followed at a moderate pace and after them the assistants; who as soon as the beast passed a large tree, caught hold of the trailing rope and fastened the ends around the thickest part of its trunk. The elephant continued to retreat to the whole length of his tether; but then, finding his progress suddenly arrested, he became furious, and exerting his whole strength, endeavored to disengage himself, till finding all attempts to escape to be useless, he gored the earth with his tusks, and screamed.

This was another period of anxiety, for had the animal, which is not unfrequently the case, broken the ropes and escaped, we should have lost him irrecoverably; for upon making his appearance among the other wild elephants, with the gear of ropes about him, they would have attacked and killed him.

But dame Fortune, or as Mikee would have it, the Nats, favored us; so, when the animal had exhausted his strength by his fruitless exertions, and stared,

with his eyes half-closed, in a pitiable state of despair the mahotes brought around him the koomkees, who gently pushed him nearer the tree, when the assistants seizing hold of the trailing ends of the ropes, twisted them around his legs and over his trunk till they had thoroughly secured him; taking care, however, while they were thus engaged, to keep out of reach of his trunk, with which he made many attempts to seize them; and having fastened him to the tree, they left him to his meditations the whole of that day and night.

The following morning, finding the animal in a good humor, and willing to eat his food, the whole of the rope gear, excepting the two by which he was fastened to the koomkees, was removed, and then it became the duty of the latter animals to pull him forward through a passage which had been previously cleared in the jungle, while the assistants behind urged him by clattering their rattles, beating tom-toms, and thrusting sticks into his sides.

It is a curious fact, that although the goondah, or male elephant, when first taken, uses his utmost force, even sometimes to his own destruction, to disengage himself, and would kill any persons within his reach; yet he never attempts to injure those syrens of his own species who have decoyed him into captivity; but, on the contrary, as often as they are brought near, in order to adjust his harnessing, or move and slacken those ropes which gall him, seems pleased, soothed, and comforted by them for the loss of his liberty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I AM SENT AS AMBASSADOR FROM THE LORD WHITE ELEPHANT.

The news that the party led by Mikee had taken a lord White Elephant, reached the chief of the hunters within a few hours after the ropes had been placed around the animal's legs; and great were the rejoicings of the inhabitants of the neighboring villages for the halo of glory it threw around them. Had their king conquered another kingdom, or driven the English invading army into the sea, the intelligence would not have been more joyfully received.

The peasants, dressed in whatever bits of finery they could collect together, lined the roads, headed by priests with their best fans, freshly-shaven heads, and in their cleanest yellow robes. The chief of the hunters, and the headman of the villagers, with those next in rank, came to welcome the sacred beast, before whom they all performed the shiko.

The chief of the hunters, addressing his four-legged lordship, apologized in the name of the king that no great minister of state had been sent to welcome him. "Yet, O mighty lord!" added the chief, "as

the Golden Foot knew not of thy advent, it was not possible that his majesty could be prepared to receive thee with all the honors due to thy sacred rank. Thy slaves have, however, erected thee a temporary palace wherein they will attend thee until the minister, secretary, treasurer, and other proper officers of thy establishment are appointed by the Golden Foot, and sent to receive thee."

After this address, which was delivered at the entrance of the village, his lordship was conducted to a large building of bamboo, which had been hastily built for his temporary residence. Scarlet cloths, ornamented with gold embroidery, were thrown over his back; a silken net, also gilt, over his head and eyes, to protect him from musquitos; and then he was placed beneath the charge of many persons, whose duty it was to watch over his cleanliness, carry to him every day the freshest herbs, which were first washed with water, and to provide everything that could contribute to his comfort. Now, although this may appear very great nonsense to you, it is, nevertheless, the custom, and it has been for many centuries, both in Ava and Siam, as you will find from the account given by Ralph Fitch, a London merchant, who writes of the then King of Ava as follows:—

"And among the rest he hath four White Elephants, which are very strange and rare, for there is none other king that hath them but he; if any other king hath one, he will send unto him for it. When one of these White Elephants is brought unto the

king, all the merchants in the city are commanded to give him a present of half a ducat, which doth come to a great sum, for there are many merchants in the city. After you have given your presents, you may come and see it at your pleasure, although it stand in the king's house.

"The king of Ava is called the King of the White Elephants; and if any other king hath one, and will not send it, he will make war with him for it, for he had rather lose a great part of his kingdom than not conquer him.

"The people do great service unto these White Elephants. Every one of them standeth in a house gilded with gold, and they do feed in vessels of silver and gold. When they go to be washed every day, they are taken under a canopy of gold and silk, carried by eight men, while ten men go before playing on drums and musical instruments; and when he is washed and comes out of the river, there is a gentleman who washes his feet in a silver basin, and which is an office given by the king himself." Master Ralph Fitch concludes by saying—"And surely they be wonderful fair and great, and some be nine cubits in height."

This account was written nearly three hundred years ago. The last, however, written by Captain Yule, who visited the present reigning White Elephant less than three years since, is to the same effect. The captain writes—

"The present White Elephant has occupied his post for at least nearly fifty years. He is close upon

ten feet high, with as noble a head and pair of tusks as I have ever seen; but he is long-bodied and lanky, and not otherwise well made as an elephant. He is sickly and out of condition, and is, in fact, distempered during five months of the year—from April to August; his eye has an uneasy glare, and his keepers evidently mistrust his temper, for we were always warned against going near his head. His color is almost uniform all over, and on the whole he is well entitled to his appellation of white. His royal paraphernalia, which are set out when visitors are expected, are sufficiently splendid. Among them was a driving-hook about three feet long, the stem of which was a mass of small pearls, girt at frequent intervals with bands of rubies; and the hook and handle of crystal, tipped with gold. His headstall was of fine red cloth, plentifully studded with fine rubies, and near the extremity having some valuable diamonds. To fix over two bumps of the forehead were circles of the nine gems which are supposed to be charms against evil influences.

"When caparisoned, he also wore on the forehead like other Burmese dignitaries, including the king himself, a gold plate inscribed with his titles, and a gold crescent set with circles of large gems between his eyes. Large silver tassels hung in front of his ears, and he was harnessed with bands of gold and crimson set with large bosses of pure gold. He is a regular 'estate' of the realm, having a minister of his own, four gold umbrellas, the white umbrellas which are peculiar to royalty, with a suite of thirty

attendants. Every person, previous to entering his palace, must pull off his shoes; and moreover, the animal has an appanage or territory assigned to him as his own especial estate, the revenues from which belong to him.

"Respecting these revenues, a whimsical anecdote is told, namely, that the king being at one time pressed for money to pay the English some indemnity-money, was compelled to take the rents belonging to the Lord Elephant; but having done this, his majesty had an address written on a long palm-leaf, formally laid before the elephant, requesting him not to take it amiss that his revenues had been devoted to the payment of the strangers, for the whole should be refunded within two months."

But to continue my narrative.

When Mikee had seen his four-footed lordship properly installed in his temporary palace, his probable requirements cared for, and we stood together alone in the house of the headman, I congratulated him upon his good fortune, when he replied, calmly—

"Truly, Mikee's fortune is good, for he can at least be useful to the noble colar, who, by destroying the crocodile, revenged the death of his relative."

"That crocodile, again! I hoped you had forgotten it, Mikee."

"Mikee does not forget his promise, and he will now serve thee;" then gazing at me, he said, "the noble colar desires to enter the Golden City, but fears being seized by the soldiers on his way?"

"Thou art right, Mikee, thou art right; for I have a dear friend who, I fear, is imprisoned, and for whose liberty I would sacrifice my own," said I; adding, "but how is it possible that thou canst assist me in this?"

"The message-man who is sent by me with the first news to the Golden Foot of the capture of the sacred beast, will be asked to choose his own reward. Thou shalt be that message-man."

"Mikee, thou hast indeed well repaid me for any good I may have done thee; for if this thing be true that thou sayest, and my friend yet lives, as I believe he does, I may rescue him," said I, joyfully, as the whole advantages of the offer occurred to me; "but Naon,—how is it he has not followed us?" I added, remembering now that I had not seen him since the first advance upon the elephant.

"The attendant of the noble colar is neither warrior nor hunter, but a household slave without heart; so, when the mahotes advanced upon the sacred goondah, he feared, and fell to the rear among the people," said Mikee.

"That is true; but it is unreasonable that he should not be here, now we are in safety," said I.

"Truly, it is not reasonable that the noble colar should regret the loss of so great a coward," said he.

"Does coming prosperity render the brave Mikee ungenerous? Would he so easily abandon one with whom he had passed through so many dangers?" said I, indignantly, and at once leaving the house to go in search of the half-caste.

Every effort, however, was useless, for he was to be found neither among the hunters or the simple villagers. All that I could hear was, what I knew, that upon the first cords being thrown around the legs of the goondah, he had retreated to the rear among the crowd; since when he had not been seen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I VISIT THE EARTH-OIL WELLS, AND WITNESS A FESTIVAL.

THE mysterious disappearance of Naon much grieved me, for I feared that by some unaccountable accident he had become the prey of a prowling tiger. However, as the bullock-cart was ready for me the next morning, and Seree, who was to act as my guide, and, moreover, conduct me to the house of the deputy governor of Yenang-young, who would provide me with a boat and a pass, so that I might reach the capital unmolested, I was compelled to leave further search in the hands of Mikee, knowing that, although he would not for the world quit the neighborhood of his great prize—the elephant—the brave fellow would send men throughout the neighboring country to search for the half-caste.

So, having received my credentials to the king in the form of a short note written upon a palm-leaf by Mikee, and attested by the chief of the king's hunters and the headman of the village, I took leave of the Carian; and for three days we traveled through a country which at every mile grew more sterile and mountainous. About the middle of the third day we came in sight of Yenang-young (which, by the

way, signifies fetid water rivulet) ; and which, from being built both upon hill and in valley, presented, with its numerous pagodas and kioums, a very fantastic appearance.

That we were approaching the celebrated oil-wells was apparent enough, from the offensive odor which saluted my nostrils; as for Seree, he seemed too much accustomed to the scent to notice it. Then, as we advanced, the face of the country became still more cheerless and sterile. The road, which wound among rocky eminences, was barely wide enough to admit the passage of a single cart ; and in many places the track in which the wheels ran, was a foot and a half lower on one side than the other.

The hills were covered with gravel, and yielded no other vegetation than a few stunted bushes. Observing, however, pieces, or rather large lumps of stone lying about in every direction, I descended from the cart, and examining one piece, could plainly see from the grain that it was petrified wood. This transformation the Burmans assert is caused by the petrifying quality of the soil, which in that place is such that the leaves of trees shaken off by the wind will not unfrequently change into stone before they can be decayed by time. But be that as it may, the soil is sufficiently extraordinary to give forth a valuable oil, which is used not only all over India for burning in lamps, smearing timber to protect it against insects, but in England by some of our celebrated candle manufacturers.

Early in the evening we arrived in the town itself,

which is about three miles from the wells, and presented ourselves at once before the deputy governor, whose grandeur and hauteur became not only modified, but positively changed to extreme politeness when I exhibited my palm-leaf note, and told him that being the bearer of such great news to the king, I required not only a pass which would prevent my being molested, but also a well-manned boat; both of which requests he very readily granted.

This great man wore a gold chain, or tslao of nine strings, and possessed a title of four syllables; all of which I mention because these chains and syllables are matters of great importance among the Burmans, and symbolize the rank of the parties who bear and wear them.

With reference to the tslao, the different number of its strings marks the rank. The smallest number of chains is three, and the greatest for a subject twelve, the intermediate ones being six and nine. Four and twenty strings to the chain are worn only by members of the royal family. Then, as for the number of syllables in the title, you must know that there is no word in the Burman tongue of more than two syllables, and not many of more than one. The king then reigning had a title consisting of twenty-one syllables, each representing some virtue or quality.

Well, not contented alone with hospitably lodging me for the night, during the earlier portion of which I had to undergo a severe *fusillade* of questions from the governor and the ladies of the household (in

Burma, unlike any country in Indostan, the women mix as freely in society as in England) respecting the size, color, appearance, and discovery of the White Elephant, the governor presented me with the dress of a Burman gentleman, and insisted that I should remain with him during the whole of the next day to witness at least the beginning of a great festival. That some festival was in preparation I imagined, for on my way from the river to the governor's house, which was a short distance in the suburbs, I saw men engaged in making all kinds of fantastic tin shrines, and enormous lanterns to contain candles more than two inches thick. Some of the more elaborate offerings were being paraded about the streets.

One party carried a gigantic representation of the palm-leaf (which the priests use as a sunshade), made of gaily painted paper, to which were attached a number of little books of gold leaf; another dragged about a tinsel tabernacle; another a dragon with a gaudily gilt ferocious head, at least one hundred feet in length, but which was made of muslin distended by hoops; and so cleverly constructed, that it was made to wind and undulate along the street, and every now and then to dart its fangs backward and forward at the passers-by.

This being the greatest of the Burman festivals (it was the end of the Buddhist Lent), during the fifteen days of the decreasing moon the cities were illuminated every night with lanterns made of different-colored transparent paper, and suspended from bamboo scaffolds. At the capital, on the three terminating

days, solemn homage is paid to the king, to the prince royal, and the chief queen. At the court of this queen, the wives and daughters of the nobles pay their homage, unaccompanied by their male relatives. The rank which each lady bears in right of her husband or father, is shown by her dress and ornaments. female priority being not less scrupulously maintained than precedence amongst the men.

So entirely were the people resigned to holiday-making, that, but for the importance of my errand, and which the governor himself did not dare delay longer than necessary, it would have been impossible to have procured boatmen to row us to Ava; as it was, the governor commanded the chief of that part of the river to have a boat in readiness for me by the second morning of the festival.

When the hour, however, arrived for my departure, and as I was performing my ablutions preparatory to taking farewell of the governor, I heard a great noise in the front of the house, and the sound of voices a few minutes afterward. Seree, who slept during the night in the outhouse allotted to the servants of the governor, ran into my room, crying—

"There is great news, terrible news arrived from the Golden City."

"What! have the English stormed the capital?" I asked, for that was an event I fully expected, nay, hoped to hear.

"It is not so, noble colar," replied Seree, who had patriotism sufficient in him to feel indignant at the question.

"Then what is this wonderful news, my good Seree?" said I.

"It is news that must be whispered only; an event has happened that it would be heavily punishable by the law to speak of openly," replied the Burman, in a mysterious whisper.

"Is, then, the king or queen dead?" I asked, knowing that to mention the death, although the fact, of either of those illustrious individuals was a criminal offence.

"It is not so; but, O noble colar, the lord White Elephant has departed."

"The White Elephant! then has Mikee followed us?" I said, thinking only of the animal, whose taking, I anticipated was to prove of so much benefit to myself, as well as Mikee.

"The Nats be thanked, it is not so; yet the calamity is great, for it is the sacred beast of the Golden Palace."

"This may be a misfortune, but it is good news for us, for now will the elephant of Mikee be of the greater value," I replied; adding, "but how know you this, Seree?"

"The messengers from the capital have but just arrived to inform the governor.',

"Then we must lose no time in taking our good news to the king," said I.

So having taken leave of the governor, who repeated to me the details of the death of the illustrious animal, and congratulated me upon the reward I should receive for taking, at such a juncture, such important

intelligence, we went down to the river and embarked The boat, to do me honor, was manned with twenty rowers, and supplied with a good stock of provisions for we could not reach Ava in less than six or seven days.

By the evening of the second day we arrived at Montha, chiefly interesting to me as being in the territory of Kyat-pyen, or the nine mountains; and which would be an earthly paradise to jewelers, for the soil, which is uneven and full of marshes, forming seventeen small lakes, is one of the richest in the world in mineral treasures, and abounds in rubies, sapphires, topazes, and other crystals. Like every other art and process of production in Burma, the method of procuring these gems is very primitive. The dry ground alone is mined by the miners, who dig *square* wells, supporting the sides with piles and cross-pieces. These wells being first sunk to a depth of twenty cubits, the miner descends with a basket, and having filled it with loose earth, he ascends, picks out the jewels, and washes them in the brooks of the neighboring hills. They continue working the wells laterally till two meet, when the place is abandoned.

Of course so despotic a gentleman as his Majesty the King of Ava claims the whole of this valuable soil, and all jewels that may be found therein, as his own property; but, by way of encouragement to the miners, he only puts in force his claim to all that may exceed the value of twelve pounds; consequently, the miners evade the law by breaking the large

stones into fragments. Still, the king's treasury possesses many fine stones of great value; and so fearful is he of exciting the cupidity of foreigners, that upon no occasion whatever are strangers permitted to visit these mines. It is not, however, so easy for his majesty to arrest the avarice of his subjects; for, some time before my arrival at Montha, two masses of rubies, each weighing two hundred and eighty pounds, had been discovered; but as the convoy was carrying them to the king, it was attacked by robbers, who succeeded in taking and making off with one of them.

Five days after leaving Montha, we reached the city of the Golden Foot, which cannot be better described than in the words of old Ralph Fitch, who, writing of Pegu, of which Ava is the model, tells us so quaintly:—

"A city strong and very fair, with walls of stone and great ditches round it. There are two towns, the old and new. In the old town are all the merchants, strangers, and very many merchants of the country. All the goods are sold in the old town, which is very great, and hath many suburbs round about it: and all the houses are made of bamboo canes, covered with straw. In your house you have a warehouse, or godoun, which is made of brick, to put your goods in; for oftentimes they take fire, and burn in an hour four or five hundred houses; so that, if the godoun were not, you should be in danger to have all burned in a trice. In the new town is the king and all his nobility. It is a square city, great

and populous, with walls, and a large ditch around them. It hath twenty gates, and many turrets, made of wood, and gilded with gold, for sentinels.

"The streets are the fairest I ever saw, as straight as a line from one gate to another, and so broad that ten or twenty men may ride afront through them. On both sides of the streets, at every man's door, is set a palm-tree, beneath which a man may walk in the shade all day. The houses are made of wood, and covered with tiles. The king's palace is in the middle of the city, and walled and ditched around; the buildings within the palace are made of wood, very sumptuously gilded, and great workmanship is on the fore front, which is likewise very costly gilded; and the house wherein his pagoda, or idol, standeth, is covered with tiles of silver, and all the walls are gilded with gold. Within the first gate of the palace is a great room, whose walls are gilded with gold; and near to this are houses for the king's elephant, which is marvelously large and fair."

Then as a proof of the honest dealings of the people in his day, this old English merchant tells us, "There are in this town eight brokers, who are bound to sell your goods for you at the price which they be worth, and you give them for their labor two in the hundred, and they be bound to make your debts good, because you sell your merchandizes on their word. If the broker pay you not on the day agreed, you may take him home, and keep him in your house, which is a great shame for him; and if

he pay you not presently, you may take his wife and children, and his slaves, and bind them at your door, and set them in the sun, for this is the law of the country."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I HAVE AN ADVENTURE WITH A KING WHOM I FIND APICKBACK.

"TRULY I know not where we may lodge, or how I may obtain this desirable audience of his majesty," said I, as we entered the Pegu gate of the outer city.

"Had the noble colar deigned to ask, his servant would have told him, that the most fortunate of hunters, Mikee, desires that he may seek the house of Shwe Maong, the buffoon of the Golden Foot, who will entertain him till he is fortunate enough to obtain an interview with the Prince of Brome, through whom alone he can obtain an audience of the Golden King"

"I am a dolt, or I should have known that Mikee would make every provision, so let us to the house of this buffoon. But what have we here?" I added, as at that moment a multitude of persons came oward the gate.

"The funeral procession of the wife of a praw lord)," replied Seree; and we stood upon the steps of a zayat, or chapel, to see it pass.

The funeral ceremony of the wife of a great lord is thus lucidly described by the envoy Crawford;—

"The insignia, or arms, of the husband were borne in front. Then come presents for the priests, and alms to be distributed amongst the beggars, consisting of sugar-cane, bananas, and other fruits, with ready made garments. A shabby elephant, on which was mounted an ill-looking fellow, dressed in red, followed, bearing a box, in which were to be placed the bones and ashes of the deceased; an office which is considered so ignominious, that it is performed by a criminal, who is pardoned for his services. Even the elephant is thought to be contaminated by being thus employed, and for this reason an old or maimed animal is selected, which is afterward turned loose into the forest.

"A band of music followed the elephant; after which came a long line of priestesses, or nuns, all old and infirm; then came ten or twelve young women, attendants of the deceased, dressed in white, and carrying her insignia. Then the state palanquins of the deceased, and her husband; the bier; the female relations of the family, carried in small litters covered with white cloths; the husband and male relatives on foot, dressed in white, followed in order

"The body was conveyed to a broad and elevated brick terrace, where it was to be burned. We assembled on this to see the ceremonies. The coffin which was very splendid, was stripped of the large gold plates with which it was ornamented; and the class of persons whose business it is to burn the bodies of the dead were seen busy in preparing the materials of the funeral-pile.

"These corpse-burners, or chandala, form a class hereditarily degraded from the rest of the people, and are held to be so impure that the rest of the people never intermarry with them."

"When all was ready, the mourners sat down at the foot of the coffin and began to weep and utter loud lamentations. Their grief, however, was perfectly under control; for they ceased, as if by word of command, when the religious part of the ceremony commenced. It sometimes happens, that when the families of the deceased have few servants or relatives, hired mourners are employed for the occasion.

"The first part of the office of the chandala was to open the coffin, turn the body upon its face, bend back the lower limbs; place six gilded billets of wood under its sides, and four over it. The priests had neither joined the procession nor taken any share in the funeral rites, but were assembled in great numbers under a shed at no great distance. But now the high priest came forward, and, along with the husband, took in their hands the end of a web of white cloth, of which the other was affixed to the head of the coffin. They sat down, and the friends and principal people joined them. The priest, followed by the assembly with their hands joined, then muttered the following prayer from the Buddhist creed:

"'We worship Buddha. We worship his law. We worship his priests.' And then repeated the five commandments. 'Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery. Do not lie. Do not drink wine.'

"The husband then pouring water upon the cloth from a cocoa-nut shell, pronounced after the priest these words—'Let the deceased and all present partake of the merit of the ceremonies now performing. To which the assembled people replied—'We partake, or we accept.'"

"The pouring of water upon the ground is considered by the Burmans the most solemn vow. It is as if it were calling the earth to witness, or rather the guardian Nat or tutelary spirit of the place; who, it is supposed, will hold the vow in remembrance, should men forget it.

"Two other priests followed the first, repeating the same, or similar prayers and ceremonies. After this, the company retired to some distance, and the funeral pile was lighted.

"Notwithstanding the pomp and parade of this ceremony, it was upon the whole not solemn, and indeed in all respects scarcely even decorous. The persons not immediately concerned in the performance of the funeral rites laughed and talked as at a common meeting, and the solemnity of the occasion seemed to affect no one beyond the husband and the son. The spectators in general seemed to view the ceremony with some vanity, as a grand national and religious display, but nothing further. Even the husband, who shed some tears, was not altogether insensible to the pomp of the occasion. He turned round to me and said, "Have you examined my wife's paraphernalia? There they are behind you; I beg you to look at them. They were all bestowed upon

her by the glorious king.' And the high priest, while he was still sitting on the ground, and when he had hardly done with prayer, turned round upon observing us, laughed very heartily, and said unconcernedly, 'Who are these strangers?'"

When the procession had passed, we followed to witness the burning. After which, we made our way into the inner town, and after a short time reached the palisades of the king's palace; a building which had not then been long erected, but was yet famous as having been the cause of one of those minor domestic tragedies so common in Eastern nations.

The architect having, at least in the eyes of the king, committed some professional mistake in the construction of the great spire, his majesty remonstrated with him, declaring that it could never stand; but the man, with a boldness wonderful for a slave, pertinaciously insisting upon its durability, was sent to the State prison for its contumacy. Shortly afterward the spire in question fell during a thunderstorm. This accident enraged the king; but as about the same time accounts were received at court of the landing of the English army at Rangoon, his majesty superstitiously believing that there was some mysterious connection between the two events, immediately ordered the unfortunate architect to be decapitated.

"Truly, the house of this buffoon is a wearisome distance, said I, much fatigued.

"The impatience of the noble colar is great; yet, if he dares to cross the palace ground, we may

shorten the distance to the house of Shwe Maon," said Seree.

"So be it," I replied, opening a wicket.

But Seree cried aloud, "The Shi-ko—the Shi-ko."

So saying, he pulled off his shoes and fell upon his hands and knees, bowing before the palace.

This, however, I could not do; it was too humiliating; yet, fearing that I might get into trouble by omitting the ceremony, I looked around for a minute. I could see no person near; and so starting at full speed ran across the grounds toward the river, hoping to get without the sacred precincts as speedily as possible. Seree followed; but turning an angle of the building, who should I see before me but Sinbad, mounted by his old man, coming full galop in our direction. Literally, it was a short, stout gentleman, some forty years of age, upon the shoulders of a stalwart fellow, in whose mouth was a muslin bridle; at which the rider, while he goaded him with the blunt end of a spear, twirled and twisted with as much vehemence as if he had been near the winning-post of a race-course.

I could go no further for laughing. A man of forty riding pickback, playing at horses, was so comical; and so intent was the rider and his man-horse, with their faces toward the ground, that they ran against me with such force that I fell, the horse stumbled, and the rider was made to fly some distance ahead.

Fearing he was hurt, I would have stopped to help

him from the ground; but Seree, taking hold of my arm, exclaimed—

"Run—run for your life; let them not see your face. Run, for it is the Golden Foot."

I did not, however, require much persuasion; the title was sufficient. I had upset the Golden Majesty of Ava in the midst of his daily exercise, so I ran toward the river. A spear whistled past my ears, the king was following, puffing and panting in the most unroyal manner; but, fortunately for me, so enraged as to forget to call to the guards.

We were, however, too far ahead; we had turned by a portion of the building which hid us from his sight. Then we soon reached a narrow path between two walls; darting along this, we came to a house and seeing it was untenanted, passed through from front to back, and were safe in the midst of a crowd of people on their way to witness the preparations making for a great elephant fight.

"Thank Heaven we have escaped the king and his royal cockhorse," said I.

"Truly, it is fortunate that his majesty did not overtake us, for we should have been less than the dust," replied Seree

"Not even the news I carry would have saved us?"

"Nought beneath heaven could have saved the life of the noble colar, so great is the Golden wrath," said Seree.

"It will be a lesson for his majesty not to get into useless passions," said I.

"Alas! the Golden King is perhaps even now but doubly enraged, and running about his palace chasing his lords with his spear; for such is his majesty's custom when any object of his wrath escapes him," said Seree.

"But this Shwe Maon? Are we near his house?" said I.

"Truly, we are not far distant, for it is near yon Temple of Ti-lo-men-lo," replied Seree, pointing to the umbrella spire of a religious building.

"Ti-lo-men-lo!" said I, wonderingly, and at which you will not be surprised, when I tell you that the English of this title is, "As likes the umbrella, so likes the kingdom."

"The noble colar thinks the title of the holy building extraordinary. It is less so, however, than its history," said Seree.

And as we proceeded in the direction of the temple he related the following story;—

"The king, the father of the Prince Ozana, being about to abdicate his throne, knew not to which of his five sons, who were all of equal merit, he should resign his crown. At length, however, he bethought of placing the white umbrella of his royal state in the midst of his children, and at the same time of praying that it might fall toward the rightful heir. Having done this, the umbrella fell toward the prince Ozana, who was immediately crowned king; when, without envy at his exaltation, the four brothers betook themselves to the monasteries and became priests."

"These legends are good, Seree, for they exhibit

the admiration of even warlike people of all ages for princes who rule by peace, love, and wisdom, instead of war," said I.

"Truly, it is better to be wise than warlike, yet the four princes were not so wise as the prince Yaza; for," added Seree, "when the King Abhira died, his two sons disputed the throne, but agreed, by the advice of their respective officers, to let the question be decided in this way: that each should construct a large building during the same night, and he whose building should be found completed by the morning, should take the throne."

"A queer style of settling such a dispute; but who came off winner?" said I.

"Yaza, the younger," replied Seree; adding, "for he used planks and bamboos only, and covered the whole with cloth; to which, by a coat of whitewash, he gave the appearance of a finished building."

"But this was cheating, not wisdom," said I.

As, however, Seree could no more understand that the two words did not mean precisely the same thing than the rest of his race, he but shrugged his shoulders as if in pity, or in contempt for my innocence. But when we had passed the temple, and arrived in front of a large house, which bore no distant resemblance to a wagon upon stilts, he said—

"Here may the noble colar rest, for it is the dwelling of Shwe Maon."

So saying, Seree sprang up the ladder like a cat to announce my arrival; and having been within the house for some few minutes, he returned and begged

of me to enter. I did so, but instantly sprang backward so far, that it was miraculous I did not go head foremost down the ladder; and certainly I do not remember ever to have been so near fainting, either before or since.

There were three persons in the room—a man (I thought at the moment a baboon), a woman, and a child; the two former of whom were crouching upon the ground, in order to receive me with respect. But the first object, the man who had caused me such a fright— Well, I will describe him, if I can.

In height he seemed to be about five feet four inches, and slenderly built; but the whole of his forehead, the cheeks, the eyelids, the nose, including a portion of the inside, the chin—in short, the whole face, with the exception of the red portion of his lips,—were covered with fine, silky, lank, silvery grey hair. On the forehead and cheeks this was about eight inches long; and on the nose and chin, about four inches.

His ears, within and without, were completely covered with hair about the same length as that on his face, which chiefly contributed to give his whole appearance, at first sight, the unnatural and inhuman aspect which had terrified me. Moreover, his entire body—for the greater portion was exposed—with the exception of the hands and feet, was covered with the same long, mane-like hair.

The woman, his wife, was an ordinary-looking Burman female; but the child, a little girl, was, like its father, covered with hair.

Thus, you see there was some reason for my fright, which I suppose the hirsute being must have been prepared for, as with a good-tempered smile, and in a clear, ringing voice, he said—

"The colar is alarmed at Swe Maon."

What could I reply? Nothing, for I really felt ashamed for having exhibited disgust at his misfortune. Seree, however, came to my relief by saying—

"The worthy Shwe Maon is the friend of the hunter Mikee."

"He is the slave of the brave hunter, who saved his life once when he would have been hunted to death in the woods as a baboon," said Shwe Maon; adding, "but the noble colar needs refreshment."

After which, he spoke not another word until, with the aid of his wife, he had placed before us a good meal of fish, rice, and tea; when, finding him intelligent, even above the average of Burmans, and, moreover, very communicative, my curiosity getting the better of good manners, I entreated of him to tell me his history. To which he replied—

"There can be no doubt that the request of the noble colar is reasonable, for it is not possible that he can ever have seen a human being so monstrously disfigured."

"Is it possible that the worthy Shwe Maon can forget that the elephant, the noblest of animals, is at the same time of most unshapely form?" said Seree.

"The worthy Seree it is that forgets that the noble beast is not alone in his unshapeliness, but of a nu-

merous tribe," replied this singular being, bitterly adding, to me—

"Know then, O noble colar, that my father was a basket-maker, in the service of the prince of that part of Laos which is nearest to the Saluen river, and three months' journey from this great city. When I was born, and until I was six years of age, with the exception of the hair upon my ears, I was like the rest of the inhabitants of this world. The strange appearance, however, of my ears was sufficiently curious to cause the Prince of Laos to present me to the Golden King, who had me taught the tricks and to climb like the monkey tribe, which, as day by day the hair upon my body increased, I so strongly resembled. So I grew in the favor of the Golden King, till, when I had reached my twenty-second year, he presented me with my wife, this house, and an income of rice and fish sufficient to keep us; for all of which gracious favor I am required to amuse his majesty's lonely hours by my antics."

Then when he had finished his story, I begged of him to tell me if, by any chance, he had heard of the fate of my friend Mr Johnson, at which, shrugging his shoulders, he said—

"The sahib Johnson is with the rest of the rebel colars, in the great prison. Moreover, the Maha Silwa, who is greatly in the favor of his majesty, and is soon to depart to again meet the army of the invaders, daily prays of the Golden King to permit him to sacrifice all the prisoners upon the altar of the Nat of Victory, that his arms may prove successful."

"But surely this cannot be; for it is not the sahib Johnson the friend of the great Prince of Prome, who must shield him from being murdered, even if he cannot procure his release?" said I, greatly alarmed for the life of my friend.

"The influence of his Golden Highness the Prince is great, but that of the chief queen is all-powerful, and her majesty's hatred of the colars is so great, that she is even now seconding the prayer of the Maha."

"Then I will throw myself at the feet of the king, and demand my friend's life, in return for the news I carry," said I.

"Truly this thing may not be, for none dare venture into the Golden presence and live, without the aid of a great lord of the court."

"Then will I seek the presence of his Highness the Prince of Prome to-morrow, and demand this aid of him, for he was my father's friend."

"Even this thing, O noble colar, is not possible, for to-morrow the elephant sports commence," said Shwe Maon.

"Then this thing *is* possible, O worthy Shwe Maon, and the noble colar is most fortunate; for he can present himself at the gate of the Prince's palace, and await the return of his highness from the sports," said Seree. A course which I at once resolved to adopt.

The rest of the evening was passed in listening to Shwe Maon's account of the great grief of the people at the death of his Highness the late White Elephant,

and, moreover, the details of the funeral obsequies, which had been concluded two days before our arrival in the city.

According to custom, the same ceremonies had been performed at the death and obsequies of this animal, as those at the demise of a chief queen for it was a female. At its decease, as at that of an emperor, it was publicly forbidden, under heavy penalties, to assert that it was dead; the law being that, in speaking of the lamentable event, it should be merely asserted, "it has departed," "or disappeared."

"At its obsequies the body was placed upon a funeral pile of sassafras, sandal, and other aromatic woods, then covered over with similar materials, and the pyre set on fire, with the aid of four immense gilt bellows, placed at its angles. After three days the chief nobles gathered the ashes and remnants of the bones, enshrined them in a golden urn, which was buried in the royal cemetery, and over which it was intended to raise a superb mausoleum, of a pyramidal shape built of brick, richly painted and gilt

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN ELEPHANT FIGHT, AND AN AUDIENCE OF THE GOLDEN FOOT.

THE next day accompanied by Seree, I joined with the crowd on its way to see the sports at the Elephant Palace; a building appropriated for exhibiting —for the diversion of the king and court—the taming of elephants.

It is on the banks of the river, about one mile from the city. The chief place is a square enclosure, surrounded everywhere by a double palisade, of immense beams of teak timber. Between the palisades there is a stone wall, fourteen feet high, and twenty feet in thickness, on the top of which the chief spectators seat themselves to witness the sport.

In the middle of this enclosure, which is carpeted with greensward, stands a temple, also surrounded by a palisade. This building is dedicated to Udin main-so, who, in consequence of his skill in taming elephants, was, at his death, created a king of Nats, and guardian and protector of elephant hunters.

The king, having taken his seat upon the wall, and the princes, after removing their shoes, having ascended, and crawled to the right and left sides of his

majesty, the signal was given for the commencement of the sport.

We had scarcely reached the top of the wall—of course at a great distance from the king and his nobles, and among the common people—when Seree exclaimed—

"They are coming!" and a cloud of dust heralded the approach of twenty female elephants, who were, partly by force, partly by persuasion, endeavoring to drive a wild male into the enclosure; and when, after about an hour, they had succeeded, and had played with him for some time, the females were withdrawn from the enclosure, one by one, and replaced by unarmed men, who, by gestures and their hands alone, endeavored to provoke the beast to run after them. For a time the animal withstood their efforts with stoical indifference; at length, however, as if it had had more than sufficient of their nonsense, it caught up one of its tormentors with its trunk, threw him into the air, and caught him as he fell, upon its tusks; then, with its trunk, placing the writhing wretch upon the ground, it trampled him beneath its feet, to the evident delight of all the barbarian audience, but the king, who immediately retired from the scene; not, however (I afterward discovered), from the same sensation of horror and pity for the poor fellow which for a moment caused me to feel faint and ill, but because it is a maxim that the sight of blood is unfit for the eyes of so sacred a personage.

The elephant, having thus frightened the rest of the men from the contest, no sooner had his majesty

retired, than twenty goats were driven into the enclosure. These little animals, however, very cleverly managed to elude the trunk of the elephant; nay, with such ease and unconcern, that they began to quarrel among themselves.

At length the elephant, beginning to exhibit signs of fatigue, three tame males, each mounted by a mahote, were brought in to secure him; an operation easily effected by throwing ropes around his neck and tusks, and then dragging him by aid of the three tame animals into a shed without the enclosure.

After the removal of the elephant and the goats, I witnessed a series of twenty boxing-matches; and although they were very good for Burmans, they were not to be compared, either in skill or indomitable pluck, with the brutal prize-fights at the same period so disgracefully common in England.

The boxers were stripped naked, with the exception of a piece of red cloth tied around their waists, and advanced into the ring using provoking language and gestures. They closed almost immediately, and wrestled, using, in the meantime, their hands and feet with considerable adroitness. The fight consisted of three rounds, unless decided earlier by some obvious advantage on one side, and by the umpire, who sat in the ring. These boxing-matches among the Burmans are much more humane than those once common in this country, for the loss of a single drop of blood is considered to be the loss of the battle. This rule, however, is the cause of much amusement, for to determine this point, the umpire frequently

stops the fight to make a minute examination of the mouths of the combatants; and as he who has but a scratched skin sedulously endeavors to hide the wound, when detection takes place the audience become aroused to merriment.

At the close of the combats, the Prince of Prome, as representative of the king, presented dresses as prizes to both winners and losers, and so brought the entertainments to a conclusion.

Boxing and wrestling are favorite pastimes among the Burmans; yet, strangely for a people barbarous, cruel, and brave, in these they exhibit a humanity which more highly civilized peoples would do well to copy. The envoy Crawford, who witnessed a series of boxing-matches, writes:—

"These were, after all, but bloodless combats, and were evidently not intended to be otherwise; for when there appeared the least risk of mischief being done from the irritation of the combatants, they were carefully parted by the umpires and their assistants. Notwithstanding the partiality of the Burmans to such exhibitions, one of our English battles would shock them exceedingly.

"During the many encounters which took place upon the present occasion, no serious accident took place; and I saw but one instance where one of the combatants was temporarily disabled; this was occasioned by a blow with the knee, given by his antagonist in the mouth, which knocked him down, but it was inflicted with so much dexterity that we could scarcely perceive how it was done. It, however

excited great applause, not only in the ring, but among the nobles."

"Let us now hasten to the palace of the prince, that we may reach the gates before the arrival of his highness," said I.

"Truly, it will be wise, for the prince is even now preparing to depart," replied Seree.

And so descending from the wall, we mixed with the stream of human beings which was now flowing back to Ava.

Having passed through the greater part of the city, Seree led me through a narrow and almost untenanted street, as he said, by a nearer route. However that might have been, we had not reached half way down this street before we were overtaken by the retinue of some great man, headed by an officer, who cried to us to fall upon our faces while his mighty master, the brother of the Golden King, the Prince of Prome, passed.

"The Prince of Prome!" I exclaimed, jumping to my feet; for, like the rest of the passers by, I had obeyed the officer's command.

"Does the slave laugh at us?" said the officer, at the same time striking me upon the head with a bamboo.

Now although his highness was a great man, I do not think I should have received a blow from his own hand without a proper acknowledgement, but a blow from a miserable, tawdry, half clad Burman official, that indeed was beyond my philosophy to endure; so, without a moment's hesitation, and perhaps under

the inspiration of the scenes I had not long before witnessed, I acknowledged his favor by a receipt in full between his eyes, which sent him beneath the elephant upon which the prince was mounted, and where, recovering himself, he sat in a state of astonishment upon his hind quarters, with his head upward, and supporting himself by his hands in a position not unlike that of a frog expectant of rain, crying to the attendants, "Seize the rogue—seize the rogue."

And dearly should I have paid for my temerity, for a dozen swords were at my breast, but for the prince, who, with scarcely less astonishment depicted upon his countenance than that of his officer exclaimed—

"The youth is bold. Whose dog is he?"

"A colar rebel," exclaimed the officer, now resuming the proper use of his legs.

"Let him be spread out in the sun," said one of the soldiers.

"He merits to be trodden to death by the elephants," said another.

But to the surprise of the whole party, the prince—who, I suppose, was in a good temper at the time, and so much amused that it was really wonderful that he did not command me to repeat the performance—ordered the soldiers to let me alone.

Gaining confidence from this order, and the good natured smile upon the prince's countenance, I plucked from my breast the palm-leaf document which had been given to me by Mikee, and threw it into

the lap of his highness, who, having glanced at the characters written thereon, said—

"The youth brings great intelligence, and should be honored. Let him follow us to the palace."

Whereupon the attendants moved forward; and as we proceeded they bowed and smiled, and at times gazed at me as if they believed me to be a beloo, or devil; for no other, in their opinion, could have secured the friendship and favor of so mighty a personage as their master by thrusting his chief officer beneath the feet of his elephant.

Arriving at the palace, the prince commanded me to await in the outer apartment until he sent an officer to conduct me to his presence. This happened in about an hour, when, having removed my shoes, a gentleman of the household conducted me into a spacious room, where his highness was sitting upon a sofa—not after the fashion of Asiatics, cross-legged, but in the European manner—indulging in the use of betel-nut.

At a sign from the prince, the attendants left the room when he ordered me to seat myself upon the mat before him, and relate the particulars of the capture of the White Elephant; a command I readily obeyed, at the same time not forgetting to give the entire credit of the discovery and taking to Mikee.

"Truly," said his highness, when I had concluded, "this Carian is a great hunter, and deserves, that the rest of his days should be fortunate. But the brave youth who snared in the dangers of the hunt, and is the first to bring the good news, merits reward

Thinking this an opportunity for making myself known, I said—

"Thy servant, O noble prince, seeks not to take from the merit and reward of the brave Carian."

"Is it possible that a person can be found so unreasonable as to refuse honor?" said the prince lifting his eyelids with astonishment.

"It is justice, justice alone, O noble prince, that is now sought by———"

"The young sahib Oliver, the son of our friend the late sahib," said his highness, interrupting me.

The son of the late friend of the noble Prince of Prome is known to his highness?" said I.

"The brother of the Golden King has eyes and ears throughout the earth," was the proud and truly Oriental reply.

And as I felt that now or never was the time to be bold, I said—

"The great prince, then, must know that his servant seeks the release of the sahib Johnson, who is now in chains, and the merchandize and silver of his late parent."

"The sahib Johnson was once the friend of the king's brother; but when he repaid our favor by aiding his rebel countrymen to place their dogs' feet upon the sacred soil of the Golden Foot, his majesty commanded him to be put to death."

Although greatly alarmed at this intelligence, I did not believe it to be other than a threat; perhaps, too, I thought, to extort money, for the kings and princes, like the slaves and ministers of Burmans,

will enter upon no negotiation that has not self-interest for at least a portion of its basis. It was a fortunate thought, and made me bolder, so I said—

"The liberty of the sahib Johnson, who is as the father of thy servant, is of more value in the eyes of thy servant, O great prince, than the merchandise and flowered silver of the late sahib Oliver."

"The life of the sahib Johnson, as also the silver and merchandise of the youth's late parent, depend upon the breath of the Golden King," was the evasive reply.

But the mighty prince is loved by his Golden brother, and possesses influence. Let him, therefore deign to use it in favor of the orphan of his friend."

"The youth is wise for his years, and knows that it is but of little use to cry for water that has been poured into a colander; therefore, since he seeks not to offend the Golden ears by asking for his parent's fortune, his eyes shall rest upon the countenance of the king, who will do him honor for being the bearer of great news," replied the prince, taking my bait.

And thus did he covertly and secretly accept or rather retain my money, in return for the life of my friend, of whose safety I now felt sure. Then perceiving his highness yawn, as if the audience had become tedious to him—and it takes but little to tire an Asiatic prince—I made my shi-ko; when his highness, touching a silver bell, a chamberlain made his appearance, whom he ordered to conduct me to the

house of visitors, a small gilded building within the grounds of the palace, where it was his custom to lodge those whom he desired to honor.

The same evening I received another mark of the prince's favor, in the shape of a state dress of crimson velvet laced with gold, from his own wardrobe, in which I was to appear at court the following morning, but was to wear that evening at a theatrical entertainment which he was about to give in honor of the festive time, and to which it had pleased his highness to invite me.

At eight o'clock, the hour the play was to commence I proceeded to witness the performance, accompanied by two of the gentlemen of the prince's household. The theatre was uncovered,—indeed, it was the open court of the palace,—but splendidly illuminated by lamps and torches; in fact, not unlike in appearance one of our own public gardens.

I was conducted to a seat raised about two feet from the ground, and covered with rich carpet, just beneath the raised, gilded, and canopied throne prepared for his highness, while a crowd of spectators stood around the stage.

The appearance of the prince and his wife was the signal for the commencement of the amusements which consisted of the performance of an eminent Siamese mimic, who delighted the audience by his wonderful delineations of the passions—now making them grave, then sad—changing his countenance and gestures from pain to pleasure, from joy to despair, from rage to mildness, and from laughter to tears,

with a rapidity and truthfulness that would have done honor to a London theatre.

After this performance, we were treated to a genuine Burman play, also acted by Siamese artists; the the story or fable of which was taken from one of their sacred books, and represented the battles of a mythological personage called the holy Ram, with the chief of the demons, who had carried away Ram's wife by means of enchantment.

Of course, like all heroes, Ram meets with many changes of fortune in the attempt to recover his wife; but at length, being wounded by a poisoned arrow, the medical sages discover that the only antidote to the poison is to be found in a tree upon the summit of a mountain, at so great a distance that to procure it seems impossible. Fortunately, however, in this strait, Hoonyman the ape-god makes his appearance and volunteers to fetch it; but when the illustrious ape gets to the mountain, he finds so many trees that he knows not which to choose. To prevent mistakes he takes up one half the mountain upon his shoulders, and with the greatest possible ease transports it to the doctor's, who there and then curing the Ram, the enchantment of the lady becomes dissolved, and she is very properly restored to the bosom of her family, greatly to the delight of herself, Ram, the audience, and especially myself, for I had become very tired of the whole affair by the time it had concluded.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GOLDEN FOOT—A SURPRISE.

The next day being a levee, or "Ask-pardon day," so called because upon that occasion the great nobility proceed to court to ask of the great king pardon for their hidden as well as known offences, and also to make presents, I was to be presented at court.

In honor to the rank of the Prince of Prome, the procession of nobles was formed at his palace. His highness was carried in a conopied sedan, surrounded by ten golden umbrellas, and followed by his state elephants, led horses, and soldiers to the number of about four hundred. Then followed the other princes of the blood, and their numerous retainers, the masters being attired in their crimson robes, and wearing golden crowns, in front of which each wore heir titles.

The procession being formed, and myself placed upon one of the elephants, near the Prince, it advanced at a slow pace, so as not to distress the bearers of presents. The houses in the streets through which we passed were low, built of wood, and covered with tiles, and had been prepared for the occasion, being fresh whitewashed and decorated with boughs and

flowers ; and the shops were crowded with their most costly goods. In front of each house was a slight latticed railing of bamboo, over which was spread a shade of bamboo mats, that reached from the eaves of the dwellings to the railing, so forming a covered balcony, every one of which was crowded with spectators, men and women indiscriminately. Boys sat on the tops of the houses, and the streets were so thronged as to leave but sufficient space for the procession to move without interruption.

To me, a very comical part of the scene was the posture which the multitude preserved. Every person, as soon as we came in sight, squatted on his hams, and continued in that attitude till we had passed by : this was an indication of high respect. Throughout the crowd there was no disturbance, or any extraordinary noise; the populace gazed in silence, but did not attempt to follow us ; and in this order we reached the royal abode.

That portion of the palace which contained the Hall of Audience consisted of a centre and two wings ; the first containing the throne, and directly fronting the outer gates. The building was of wood, excepting its many roofs, which were covered with plates of tin in lieu of tiles. Over the centre was a tall, handsome spire, called by the Burmans Pyat-that, crowned by the tee, or iron umbrella, which as I have said, is an exclusive ornament of the temple and palace.

The Hall of Audience itself was without walls, and open all round, except where the throne was

placed. The roof was supported by a great number of handsome pillars, richly and tastefully carved; while the whole fabric was raised some twelve feet high; upon a terrace of stone and lime, so smooth and highly-polished that I mistook it for marble; further there were three entrances, one at each wing, and the other, which was appropriated to the sole use of the king in the middle.

Stopping before the royal entrance, the officers of state dismounted, and leaving their retinue, umbrellas, and litters outside, followed the Prince of Prome, who led the way to the presence chamber, when the party filed off to the right and left, myself among the latter, leaving the princes alone in front, and near the throne, before which all squatted upon their hams, in such a position as not to exhibit the soles of their feet; to have done which in the presence of royalty would have been considered akin to treason.

Gorgeous as was the hall itself, it was exceeded in show and richness by the throne, which stood at the back of the hall, beneath a canopy fringed with gold, upon a pedestal of mosaic, mirrors, colored glass, and silver.

For about ten minutes the audience sat looking wistfully at the lattice-door at the back of the throne, when the music commenced, and shortly afterward the Golden King, my friend of the pickback, made his appearance, tottering beneath the great weight of his robes; but that his walk was a little unsteady, you will not wonder, when I tell you he wore a tunic decorated so plentifully with rubies, sapphires

and other precious stones, that there was not the space of a finger to spare. His crown, which was shaped like the spire of a Burman pagoda, was of solid gold, and studded with jewels; while in his hand he held a chowrie, that is, the white tail of a Thibetian cow. This chowrie is one of the five important symbols of Burmese royalty. The other four being an ornament for the forehead, a sword of state, a queerly-shaped pair of shoes, and the white umbrella.

Splendid, however, as was the dress of the Burmese monarch, he seemed to have strange notions of dignity, at least that dignity with which England's monarchs comport themselves, and of which even I know no more than what I have observed in illustrated histories, where the pictures lead you to believe that the monarch (being once made up to look like a king), with sceptre in hand, and crown on head, he thus stiffly passes the rest of his life. But be this as it may, the king of Ava, seeming to have more regard for his rich dress than his dignity, had no sooner ascended the steps than he flapped the sacred cow's tail backward and forward upon the royal seat for about five minutes; after which, as if satisfied he had removed all the dust, he adjusted his robes and sat down, whereupon the whole audience joined their hands above their heads, and knocked the ground three times with their foreheads.

As soon as his majesty had made himself as comfortable as was possible, under such gorgeous circumstances, the queen, quite as weightily and richly attired in silk velvet, gold, and jewels, ascended the

steps, and took her seat by the side of her royal husband, being probably the only queen who ever occupied such a position, in not only the Burman, but any Oriental court; but then her majesty was rather an extraordinary personage.

It was said that she was of humble origin: indeed, the daughter of the chief gaoler of Ava. As queen, however, she had so entwined herself around the heart of his majesty, that he rarely went abroad, or showed himself to his people without being accompanied by her. On the most solemn and important occasions she sat with him on the throne, and in public processions her vehicle was carried by the side of his majesty's; and even when they were spoken of, the customary form of expression was, not the king and queen, but the "two sovereign lords."

When the royal lady had taken her seat upon the throne, and received the homage of the audience, a band of Brahmin soothsayers, who stood behind the throne in white caps and robes trimmed with gold, chanted a hymn, after which the Than d'haugan, that is, reporter of the palace, sang, in a sonorous voice, the list of offerings his majesty had made to the pagodas of the city.

And this, the first portion of the ceremony being accomplished, the present-making and pardon-asking of the tributary princes, nobles, and merchants was initiated by the Prince of Prome, who delivered an oration, which, although the common form of addressing the Burmese king, so far surpasses in extravagance the forms of all other Eastern nations.

that I will repeat it for your edification. Thus it ran :—

"Most excellent, glorious sovereign of land and sea, lord of the celestial elephant, lord of all White Elephants, master of the supernatural weapon, sovereign controller of the present state of existence, great king of righteousness, object of worship,—on this excellent, propitious occasion, when your majesty, at the close of Lent, grants forgiveness, thy servant, the Prince of Prome, under the excellent Golden Foot, makes submission and tenders offerings of expiation."

Then, having repeated a list of the presents, the prince took from the hands of a noble a few grains of rice, and again performed the shiko, in token of his homage and submission.

The same ceremony having been performed by the other princes, nobles, and merchants, in the order of their rank, his majesty arose, and trembling as before beneath his covering of jewels and gold, tottered down the steps most unmajestically, yawning at the tedium of the gorgeous burlesque, in which, although silent, he had been the principal performer. The queen followed, and then the princes and nobles arose and took their departure in the order of state in which they had arrived. All, I should have said, but the Prince of Prome, who, waiting till the others had left the Hall of Audience, then beckoned to me to follow him through a door at the back of the throne, which led into the vestibule or anteroom of the inner palace, when, motioning to me to remain, he left me

pondering as to whether he had or had not gone to procure me a private audience.

I had waited about an hour when a richly-attired personage, whom I afterward found to have been one of the royal chamberlains, led me through a suite of rooms into a large apartment, where I saw dancing girls and female minstrels, crowned with pagoda-shaped tiaras, like those worn by the nobles.

At the extreme end of this room was the royal sofa, ornamented with gilding and looking-glass; and near to hand a crimson and yellow rug, upon which were placed the golden sword-holder, spittoon, betel-box, and many other small ornaments of the same metal, inlaid with gems.

These royal playthings were really very handsome specimens of Burman artifice; but while I was examining them the music struck up, some guards entered by a small door near the sofa, and squatted down upon their hams, as indeed did all present, and the king made his appearance—no longer the jewelled and golden dummy of the Audience Hall, but clad in a robe of white muslin, across which was thrown the nine-stringed and splendidly-jewelled tslao, with a head-dress of a similar material; and, moreover, as lively and merry-looking as when I had seen him taking pickback exercise in the front of his palace.

When his majesty had thrown himself upon the sofa, and had begun to chew his betel-nut, the chief minister crawled toward the royal feet, and with tremulous voice, said—

"May the meanest of the slaves of the magnificent Golden Foot speak and live?"

"Does the dog dare bring to us ill news in our hours of relaxation, that he fears to speak?" said the king.

"Alas! O king, one of thy armies has been surprised by the rebel colars."

"Who, of course, have been all slain by our brave soldiers," said the king.

"Alas! if I may utter the words and live, it is not so, O great king; for the rebels were so numerous, that they dispersed the soldiers and slew thy brave general."

"Truly, then, he merited his death; for why didn't the fool run away," said his heroic majesty, and his reply is chronicled in history.

The king then waived his hand as a sign that the audience was ended, but the minister said—

"Truly, O great sovereign, the empire is being ravaged alike by friends and enemies; for not only are the rebel colars advancing, but the two great chiefs of Laos, your majesty's tributaries, are destroying each other's territories, and each demands the aid of the Golden Foot to subdue his enemy."

"This is another affair, and demands our attention, replied the king, seriously; adding, to the Prince of Prome, "Is it possible that our wise brother has no plan for subduing both these chiefs, who are troubling us with their quarrels?"

To which the prince, first crawling nearer the sofa, replied--

"It once happened, O king and brother, that two cocks of equal strength began fighting in the presence of a countryman; after continuing their combat for some time, they were so overcome by their exertions, that they were unable to do anything more, when the countryman sprang upon them, and made himself master of both. Thus ought you, O king! to do at present. Let these two troublesome princes fight with each other till you see that their resources are exhausted, and then, pouncing upon them, seize their territories for your royal self, and so all trouble in that quarter will find an easy ending."

"The wisdom of my brother is as brilliant as the chiefest jewel in our crown; so let the affair be settled," replied the lazy monarch, again waiving his hand to the minister, who then shikoed and took his departure.

It was then that the prince seized the opportunity of commanding me to come forward and pour into the Golden ears the refreshing news of which I was the bearer. I obeyed; and while I repeated the history of the taking of the White Elephant, his majesty listened so attentively, and with such joyous countenance, that my hopes arose very high in my heart, even to the restoration of my property, as well as the liberty of my friend. Guess, therefore, my astonishment, when, at the conclusion, the king, without even deigning to look at me, but addressing the prince, said—

"The happy discovery of the sacred beast again restores us to our rank as the greatest of the kings of

the earth, and great is the merit of the Carian hunter, who shall be made mighty among men; but what dog's son is this who dares bring stale news to our Golden ears."

Enraged beyond all prudence by this reply, I said —"Stale news, O king! How can this thing be possible, when deputed by the brave hunter himself, whom I aided to capture the sacred beast, to bring the intelligence to your majesty. Thy servant hath rested upon his way but time sufficient to recruit nature."

"Truly, O king and brother, the words of the youth are straight as the flight of the arrow," interposed the Prince of Prome, at the same time handing to his majesty the palm-leaf which I had entrusted to his highness's care.

"Ah! then the other dog deceived us," said the king, upon examining the leaf; adding, "let the rogue be brought forth." And I received another and greater surprise, for among the people at the other end of the apartment came forward—Naon Myat.

Not, however, in the attire becoming the slave of the Prince of Prome, but in the rich garb of one who had received the king's favor.

"This rogue, O king and brother, is my slave. I sent him to the city of Rangoon to bring to Ava the youth before thee; but the dog fled from his charge, and should be punished with the loss of his miserable life," said the prince.

"The wisdom of our brother is great, and his name

is engraven upon our heart. Yet this thing may not be; for this fellow, dog though he be, being the first to pour such glorious news into our ears, must henceforth be free," replied the king.

"O king and brother, let not thy royal eyes be blind to justice. This rogue of a slave must have stolen the glorious news, for, as thou hast seen, this youth is the only person deputed by the now illustrious Carian to convey to thy ears the intelligence," said the prince.

"Has the dog no reply?" said the king, addressing Naon.

"The colar boy is a rebel, and in league with the traitors now in chains awaiting the Golden King's mercy. Moreover, great king, he is a rogue, for he stole from thy servant the palm-leaf message which was entrusted to thy slave," replied Naon, as demurely as if he had been speaking the truth.

"Ah! this thing is possible, my brother, and accounts for this boy having possession of the palm-leaf," replied his sapient majesty, with evident delight.

The prince, however, shook his head, saying—

"This is not possible, O king and brother, for the youth has said it; and these Western colars are as celebrated for their foolishness in always telling the truth, as we Burmans are for our wisdom in keeping the truth secret when it answers a purpose."

"Then is thy slave foolish, for he has told the truth," said Naon, again.

And this aroused me from the state of indignant

stupor into which his assertion had plunged me, and I exclaimed—

"Thou treacherous rogue——"

But before I could conclude the sentence, the king, who preferred having to reward Naon than one of his own enemies, and who, moreover, had now become puzzled, said—

"When two slaves assert their claim to an honor, which can only belong to one, who shall decide?" said the king.

"The illustrious Carian himself, O king and brother," suggested the prince.

"Truly, thy advice is good," said his majesty; adding, "let them both be secured in the prison stocks until the arrival in the city of the great and fortunate hunter, whose duty it shall be to decide, when the reward and the punishment shall be both meted out as they are found to be deserved."

"Truly, the wisdom and justice of the Golden King shineth as brilliantly as the sun in the heavens," said the prince, as I thought, with a curl of contempt upon his lip.

Thus, at least for the time being, ended my sanguine hopes; but as we were leaving the Golden presence, the king, who in his great joy at the discovery of the White Elephant evidently did not wish to exercise severity, even toward a criminal, said, as if the thought had suddenly occurred to him—

"Stay, thou dogs. Upon the arrival of the illustrious hunter the truth must be known, when he who is deserving will be rewarded, and he who is not, in-

stantly punished. Therefore, as we would not that the sun should go down without having witnessed our readiness to show favor to the bringer of the glorious news, let him who is false declare his falsehood, and he shall be pardoned."

"This is wise, O king and brother; but should the slaves refuse thy magnificent offer?" said the prince.

"Then he who is guilty shall die beneath the feet of our elephants the moment after the words of proof have quitted the lips of the Carian hunter," replied the king, warmly.

Now Naon, who had hitherto despaired for his life, knowing that the decision of the hunter would be in my favor, and rejoicing at the opportunity offered him of escape, bent his neck to the ground, and confessed that on the instant he had seen the first cords thrown across the White Elephant, he had resolved upon carrying the news of its capture to the king, in the hope of obtaining the reward; unfortunately, however, for himself, quite ignorant that the reward was due, not to the person who brought the first intelligence, but to him who was deputed by the hunter.

"This is well," said the king; adding, "and the dog merits punishment; as, however, he has our promise, let him be stripped of his robes, and sent from the city, that our eyes may not again be darkened by his villainous countenance."

And Naon, too glad to escape upon such easy terms, crawled sideways, crab-like, out of the presence.

"It is now fitting that the colar youth should claim his own reward in silver, jewels, or land," said the king, in the exuberance of his gratitude to the Nats.

Then performing the shiko, I said—

"It is not silver, jewels, or land that is at the heart of thy servant, O king over numerous kings, and lord of the White Elephant."

"Truly, the youth is as foolish in his modesty as in his truthfulness," was the reply of this unprincipled chief of an unprincipled people; adding, "yet it is the command of the king that he should claim a reward, or the Nats will deem us ungrateful, and punish the kingdom by some accident to the sacred beast itself."

Then I replied—"The reward I seek, O mighty king, is the liberty of my friend the sahib Johnson."

But, to my astonishment, his majesty arose from his sofa, and, choking with indignation, snatched up a spear by his side—a weapon with which, when very angry, he was in the habit of chasing his chief minister about the palace—and cried to the prince his brother—

"Take the vile dog hence, or we shall forget our promise, and slay him upon the spot."

Now, this was very fine for a king of Burmans, but then I did not value his passion at one fig; indeed I have at all times a contempt for passionate people. Moreover, I was so indignant at his injustice, that I should have replied to his majesty rather pertly, had

not the Prince of Prome immediately led me from the presence, made me mount his own elephant, and taken me to his palace, where he soothed my feelings by telling me that he would take care of me until his royal brother's temper should become sufficiently calm for him to again plead for my friend's liberty.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ENEMY DESTROYED AND A FRIEND RECOVERED.

Thus, as if too good to be punished, and not good enough to be rewarded, I passed many weeks in a kind of honorable confinement in the palace of the Prince of Prome; meanwhile remaining in profound ignorance as to the real cause of the king's violent behavior at so moderate a request as the release of Mr. Johnson. Alas! I had forgotten that while the Maha Silwa, that most inveterate enemy of the English, continued in favor with the king, such a thing was, to say the least, improbable.

I have told you that this general had earnestly sought to have the whole of the European prisoners sacrificed, by way of propitiating the favor of the Nats upon an expedition he was about leading against the English. Whether, however, his majesty was less cruel than his minister, or really feared the British army too much to comply, I know not; certain, however, it was, that the general had to depart with his army without the sacrifice being granted; and, moreover, it was said, with no small decrease of the favor of the king, who was angry that, some short

time before, when the English had made overtures for a treaty of peace, he had permitted the Maha Silwa to reject it, and prolong the war. "For truly," said his majesty, "it is well to be at peace with these colar rebels; for he who is at war with them is in the position of a man who has hold of a tiger by the tail, which he fears either to hold or to let go."

Well, one day, while the people of Ava were in the midst of their preparations for the reception of the White Elephant, whose arrival was now expected daily, there came terrible news; no less, indeed, than that the army of the Maha, some sixteen thousand strong, had been defeated in a great battle upon the banks of the Great River, and nearly all of them either bayoneted or drowned.

This defeat, of course, was attributed to the cruel, but brave and unfortunate Maha, who was now hated as much by the king as he had always been by the people; all of which, had he been as wise as he was brave, he would have anticipated; but no, still trusting to the favor of his king, he found his way to court, and, on his first audience, had the indiscretion to beg for another army to lead against the English, whom he promised to destroy that time without fail, but his majesty, now provoked beyond all patience at his assurance, and angry with himself for having broken off the negotiations for peace, commanded the general's immediate execution.

Savage as was the nature of this man, I could not but feel pity for his miserable fate. As soon as the royal command had gone forth, the Maha was drag

ged from the Hall of Audience by the hair of his head to the prison. On the way he was treated with the most savage ferocity by the gaolers and executioners, who knew it was safe thus to treat a man who had not only incurred the displeasure of the king, but that of the people; so he was stripped naked, the executioners disputing with each other for different parts of his dress, and thus dragged to the prison from whence after an hour's sojourn, he was driven at the spear's point to the place of execution, amidst the jeerings of the populace; and, indeed, otherwise so maltreated that he was nearly dead before suffering decapitation.

Thus wretchedly died the man who had been the cause of so much misery to the European prisoners; and now I hoped that the royal policy would be changed toward them: but for many days after the Maha's execution nothing was thought of in Ava but the preparations for the reception of the lord White Elephant. The multitude flocked from all parts of the country to the city to witness his arrival. His lordship's establishment was appointed under the charge of his principal officers, namely, a wun, or minister, a wun-dauk, or deputy-minister, and a saregyi, or secretary; for the proper support of all of whom the king assigned one of the finest districts in his kingdom.

On the day of his arrival, a festival, which lasted three days, was commenced by a great display of music, dancing, and fireworks; and he entered the Ava river through rows of splendidly decorated boats,

filled with the nobility in their state dresses, headed by the king and royal family, in their golden boats The animal stood upon two large flat-bottomed boats made of teak wood, in a superb pavilion, with a roof resembling those of the royal palaces, adorned upon every side with gold, and draped with silk embroidered with the same precious metal, and which was towed by three golden boats ; in the largest and most conspicuous of which stood the fortunate hunter, Mikee, attired in the garb and wearing the golden crown of a noble of the second rank to which he had been raised in honor of the Elephant, to whom, for many days after its entry into the city, the most costly presents continued to be made by the lords, ministers, and chief merchants of the empire.

It is a pity to tarnish this glittering description ; yet, for truth's sake, I must tell you that it was very well known that these presents were more to satisfy the avarice of the king than to do any especial honor to his brute highness, the elephant; for all these magnificent gifts—and one of them was a vase of gold weighing four hundred and eighty ounces—found their way into the royal treasury.

When the elephant had been installed in his palace, and the festival had closed, Mikee, in addition to his titles—which, by the way, although they delighted the hunter, were too numerous for me to mention—had conferred upon him a large village; and, moreover, an office in the state. After which, the first thought of the grateful fellow was to make inquiries about myself of the Prince of Prome, which were

answered by his highness bringing him to my lodgings in his own palace. When, as modest in greatness as he had been in his peasant state, his only reply to my warm congratulations upon his good fortune was—

"The despised Carian has been fortunate; still the merit belongs not to him, but to the holy Brahmin and the Nats, who chose Mikee as they might have chosen a grain of rice out of a field; but," he added, "the Carian hunter can know no pleasure while the noble colar is unhappy; and it is not possible for his generous heart to be buoyant while his friend the sahib Johnson still remains in chains, expecting the long-threatened death."

"This is true," Mikee;" and, catching hold of his arm, I added, "both my fortune and my friend are lost; for the first I care but little, so that the latter be saved. O Mikee! you once promised not to quit the hunting-grounds until thou hadst done me some great service. It is that service I now require at your hands."

"Mikee uttered no idle words, for they are still engraven upon his memory. It is therefore only for the noble colar to command to be obeyed."

"My friend the sahib Johnson, canst thou aid in obtaining his liberty?" I replied; adding, however, despairingly, "but this thing thou canst not perform, O Mikee; for not even his brother the Prince of Prome could soften the heart of the Golden King in favor of a European prisoner."

"Knows not the noble colar that the terrible Mahan

Silwa has been executed for his crimes, and that thus one terrible influence over the Golden mind has been swept away?"

"True, true, O Mikee. The removal of that tyrant gave me hope; but the king hates the Europeans, and loves their wealth too much to restore the liberty of the one or resign the other."

Then having pondered for a minute, the hunter said—

"It is true the Golden King and lord of many elephants loves wealth; but it is fortunate that it is so, for by wealth may the liberty of the sahib Johnson be obtained."

"Alas! O Mikee, thy words are cruel; for well thou knowest I possess not one ounce of silver I could offer as my friend's ransom."

"But the noble colar claims the property of his late parent. Would he forego these claims?"

"Willingly, O Mikee. But to what purpose? for, truly, the king is so powerful that what he has already seized he can retain, fearing neither the clamor of his prisoners nor that of so humble a person as myself."

"This is not so; his majesty would make peace with the English, and fears that he shall be compelled by them to return the property of his prisoners," said he.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, as a light flashed across my mind," "thou hast already been using thy influence over the Golden Foot, my good, brave, kind Mikee," said I; adding, "is it not so?"

Then taking me by the hand after the English fashion that I had taught him, Mikee said—

"Pardon thy servant that he kept thee so long in suspense, but he knew not that even the generou colar would sacrifice his all for his friend."

"Then it is so; you have pleaded before the king for my friend's liberty, and you have been successful?" I said, with delight.

"After the installation of the sacred Elephant, it was my first duty to inquire for him I may now call my friend, and from his Highness the Prince of Prome I heard of your unsuccessful suit, and the anger of the Golden Foot, when I vowed to Guadama not to seek thee until I could be the bearer of good news. Then, at my audience to receive honors from the king, instead of land for myself, I claimed, as my reward, that the sahib Johnson should be set at liberty, and to thee thy parent's property restored. The request caused his majesty to be seized with a fit of anger; which, however, being beneath the shadow of my recent services, soon became softened, and he condescended to inform his slave that, as the necessities of the state during the war had swallowed the whole wealth of the Europeans, it was impossible that he could restore it; and, moreover, that he was so fearful that the English would make the restoration of the prisoners' properties a condition of peace, that he had determined to restore none to liberty who would not voluntarily present their property to him as a free gift; and thus can I only offer thee the liberty of thy friend upon condition——"

"That I resign all claim to my father's property," I said.

Himself the vehicle of these hard, unjust conditions, Mikee could but bow an affirmative. But need I tell you, my reader, how gladly, heartily I accepted them, or with what joy I shortly afterward received my friend in the palace of the Prince of Prome, in the presence of his highness and Mikee.

Although sadly altered in appearance from half starvation and long confinement in the miserable prison of Ava, he no sooner heard the conditions of his release, than he stoutly refused to accept it at the cost of my fortune, till the Prince of Prome said—

"Truly, the sahib Johnson must be possessed by evil spirits, who are eating away his brains, for has not the young colar Oliver the friendship of the brother, and the now greatest friend of the Golden Foot."

"Pardon, great prince; but as it would indeed be ungrateful of thy servant to doubt the power and goodness of such friends, he consents," said Mr. Johnson.

And with wisdom; for it had suddenly occurred to him that the words of his highness signified, what really happened at the termination of the war between the English and the Burmans, the restoration of about half the property due to us both. No bad portion, I thought, either, when I remembered the hands through which it passed, which were even those of our good friend the prince himself, who, although

in possession of many good qualities, could not handle coin without a large per-centage of it adhering to his fingers.

In conclusion I have only to add that, with the remnants of our properties, Mr. Johnson and myself established ourselves as merchants in the capital city, where, after twenty years of toil, losses, and gains, we managed respectively to accumulate sufficient money to support us comfortably in our own country for the remainder of our lives.

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